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SIR RALPH ESHER:

OR,

ADVENTURES

OF

A GENTLEMAN OF THE COURT OF

CHARLES II.

[By Leigh Hunt]

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

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MEMOIRS
OF
SIR RALPH ESHER.

CHAPTER I.

TILL the time had elapsed by which I ought to have received news of my friend, my sanguine temper had induced me to make myself very easy respecting him. I persuaded myself that Lady Vavasour could not but love him, especially since he had been one of the naval conquerors. I concluded that he would make his appearance at Mickleham, settle everything to his heart's content, come to Whitehall with the news, and then—what of Miss Randolph?

Had Miss Randolph still any regard for me? Would it give her pleasure to see me? Did I

love her or not? and did not the very question show, that I had no business to ask it? Miss Randolph had turned out to be a Duke's daughter; but then she was a natural daughter. How far did the one consideration lead me to think I felt a renewal of my love? And how far did not the other incline me to doubt it? Who was her mother? Lord Ossory, son and heir of the Duke himself, had married the daughter of a natural son,—a son of the Prince of Orange. This was a bar upon a lofty scutcheon; though to be sure, the illegitimacy was once removed, and the grandfather was a Prince. But on the other hand, Ossory was the son of an English Duke; and the Eshers, though an old family, could hardly quarrel with their representative for thinking it as warrantable on his part, to marry the natural daughter of so great a peer, as it was in a Duke's son to ally himself to a princely, but Dutch illegitimacy. The Duke himself was, by style and title, a "High and Mighty Prince." But then again, who was the lady's mother?

My good friend, Esher, said I, assuredly thou art not in love, or thou wouldst not trouble thyself about the lady's mother?

But prudence, decency, example, the giving countenance to things ill.

Oh, thou art a sage personage, and of a most didactic habit of life. We are all so at court.

The lady has been ill for thee; think of that: has been nigh unto death's door. This is a "love in a book," as Lady Vavasour would call it. Thine old romances could hardly have produced anything more flattering, within the limits of probability.

True, but she got well again: she is both handsome and plump; I have just had advices of it. In fine, for out it must, she has another lover!

Yes; in the course of my meditations on this subject, into which I fell profoundly when I had read my friend's manuscript, it struck me that I ought, on every account, to enquire into the welfare of the ladies at Mickleham. I did so. Lord Manchester had just been down on a visit. I contrived to make him talk of it, and he gave me the best intelligence. I could have wished a brick-bat chucked in his highly respectable and somewhat venerable face, for every sentence he uttered. "Lady Vavasour was never so well in her life. She was as handsome—as handsome,—there was no describing it,—and the life of all the parties that were so happy as to be invited; which were very small

and select. Miss Randolph was very handsome, and had grown quite a buxom beauty. She had a declared lover, one Mr O'Rourke, a fine young gentleman, and a friend of the Duke of Ormond's. And old Mr Bennett was very well. He was really a fine looking old man,—so venerable with his silver locks. Miss Vavasour, too,—she was very well,—remarkably well.”—“A most respectable woman, I believe, my Lord.”—“Oh, very respectable; highly so; highly esteemed,—very.” And his Lordship, in the energy of his approbation, growled, and shook his elderly and respectable cheeks. His Lordship was a man who had been of the most opposite parties, and was highly respected by all. I had a great mind to ask how the dog was, and the park gate.

I made up my mind to enjoy myself extremely, till news should arrive of Sir Philip; and not to care anything for a girl, who was so ungrateful as to forsake a false lover. The interest which my friend wished to create for her in my heart, had touched me more, and disposed me to be more in love than ever; nor could I think of the “fine young gentleman, a friend of the Duke of Ormond's,” without considerable impatience, and a longing to contest his victory. But at present nothing remained but to keep

the secret with which Sir Philip had entrusted me, and endure my mortified vanity as I could. I took a lesson from his Majesty, and called on several ladies one after the other, who returned my compliments with so much sweetness, and seemed so inclined to pity me if I told my story, that I rallied, and became excellent company. In fact, I did tell it to Miss Warmestre, Sir Philip's confidential matters apart; and I had the pleasure of seeing her become livelier than ever. I did not ask after the stranger, of whom Lady Castlemain told me; but perhaps it was lucky that I did not forget him.

The court removed to Hampton, to get out of the way of the Plague. This calamity broke out just as we were going to sea; and was now giving frightful proofs of its increase. Thousands died in London every week. Must I confess, that by one universal consent we seemed to have resolved to say nothing about it? Nay, if we thought about it, we determined to be only the more thoughtless; and for some weeks, I did not suffer the word to pass my lips. We looked up to the sky, wandered and laughed among the alleys green; and Hampton might have been taken for an odd kind of a bit of heaven, privileged from the miseries of earth.

All the day a turf or a soft carpet was under my feet; sunshine, or trees, or painted ceilings over my head; music was in my ears, beauty all around me; and the King, by making me sit down with him at supper, had completed my pretensions as a courtier. What was better, I was made a Page of the Presence; and there was a talk of sending me to France with Lord Buckhurst, on a message to the French court.

The King heard more of the plague than anybody. He thought it his duty to speak of it; and one or two persons, dissatisfied with their share of our pleasures, took it in their head to vex him by speaking of it too much. One of these gentlemen having mentioned the state of London with an affectation of woe, that sat very ill upon him, Lady Castlemain was provoked to utter her mind on the subject. "I wonder, sir," said she, addressing the King, "that your Majesty does not *forbid* the mention of this horrid plague. If one could do any good, it would be another thing; but as that is impossible, where is the use of being teased with such dismal accounts?"

"My lords and ladies," cried his Majesty, playfully, "and you, gentlemen and ladies of our honourable household, henceforward there

is no plague. We abolish it: so you are therefore to hear no more dismal accounts. God help the poor people, nevertheless," added the King, with great seriousness; "I wish we could shut up our knowledge as well as our ears."

"Do not be afraid," said Bab May; "it will be for their good. It will tame their proud spirits, and teach them to set better store by their kind Prince."

A silence ensued, which everybody seemed afraid of interrupting. Montagu broke it by asking Miss Stewart if she rode as much as usual; and the King seized the opportunity of turning the conversation.

We were all out in the garden that day. Some of us wandering about, the others collected round the King in the beautiful glade, where the great summer-house stands.

Let me see;—besides the whole court, the Duke's as well as the King's, and the principal Ministers, and the whole honourable body of the Maids,—the Count de Grammont was there, M. de Comminges, and the Duke de Verneuil, natural brother of the Queen Dowager; an old hunting gentleman. There were also Mrs Rich and my Lady Manners; Mademoiselles de la Grange and Dumenil; Madame de Saint Cricq; Donna Olivia What's-her-name, the walnut-tree

woman;* Miss Jones, whose wit stood her instead of beauty; Miss Taafe, who talked the prettiest Irish in the world, just as if she was out of breath; little Miss Carden, with a cast in her eye, on which everybody took pity, on account of its roguery; and a certain Miss Cozens, daughter of a church dignitary, who had the health and spirits of a dairy-maid, and the elegance of a court angel,—if there is such a thing. It was delightful weather. The scent of May came to us from a neighbouring field, and his Majesty and the ladies were amusing themselves with basins of the gold and silver fish, then lately brought among us. The ladies took little pieces of bread with which they invited the fish to run their noses against the glass; and many pretty things were said of the way in which they gaped and turned themselves in vain. His Majesty was allowed to be the best hand at beguiling the fish. They left all the courtiers to go to him; whether by contrivance, did not appear. Grammont lost a purse to him, but he said he would have his revenge at night. We thought he meant at cards,

* Who this person was, I cannot discover; most probably one of the Portuguese companions of the Queen. The designation of “the walnut-tree woman” I must acknowledge to be an equal mystery.—*Edit.*

for he had invited a party of us to supper, and his Majesty was graciously pleased to attend. But he meant on the fish, for the revenge consisted in his having ordered a course of these rarities, which must have cost him a prodigious sum. He was always doing something of this sort, which got him a great deal of credit. The more money he spent, the more he seemed to gain. He had the reputation of being an unfair player; but he selected his victims so well, was so cautious and generous with the knowing, and made such a form of calling none to a severe reckoning but such as wanted address to dispute it, and would rather pay anything than look foolish, that although he was a younger brother, poor, and an exile, he lived among us like a prince. He distributed his favours on all sides, and was in special favour with the King, who had indeed good reasons to like him; for he refused his pensions, lost him his money, and entertained him with a perpetual round of jests. Only the ladies were not as grateful as he could wish. They accepted his presents and his perfumes; but disconcerted him, when he became serious, by telling him he was joking. In truth, they had no reliance on the Chevalier; for besides being revengeful, he would sacrifice anything to a jest; and he really had not the art of con-

vincing women that he was in earnest. This made him savage with all who had; and was the secret of his enmity to Harry Jermyn.

Somebody gave one of these supper parties almost every night, and the King was almost always present. The Queen was as noisy as anybody, and would come frolicking with some of the blessed maids. Lady Castlemain and she were now sworn friends. Her Majesty would have the spleen for a day or so, and the tears would be in her eyes at something; but a little hard-heartedness from the King, and the good-offices of her Ladyship, brought matters about, and then there was a ball, at which the Queen and the Duchess of Buckingham furiously thumped the floor; and nothing would satisfy poor Katherine, but Castlemain must take ices from her hand, and be crammed with cakes.

In the morning we loitered as aforesaid, or had a water-party, or magnanimously shot hares and sparrows; and Miss Stewart had a silver gun, which popped as harmlessly as need be. Also, we shot at butts; and we bowled much. Then somebody sat to Lely for a picture, and his room was crowded with beauties. Lely was a high fellow, who affected to imitate Vandyke and Rubens in his style of living, as well as his pictures; but, as he was by nature a bit of a clown,

he overdid it. So his draperies ran over with tawdriness, and his living into city shew. However, it was a fine sight to see the flower of the court assembled in his large room. His dinners were gross; but with his mahl-stick in his hand he was not to be despised; so the fair setters languished before him with their half-shut eyes, as if he was a sultan. He made an impudent portrait of Castlemain as Britannia, with a helmet on, and a storm about her ears; which was done to make amends for Miss Stewart's figuring in the same character on the coin. But I must say, his picture of Miss Taafe was as good as if a bridegroom had done it. He seemed to have said, "Stop a moment, my dear, before you finish your dressing; I will take you in that attitude." The omnipotence of unresisting beauty was in it.

We rode out at all hours of the day, whole crowds of us. A fashion had come up for the ladies to ride in men's hats and cravats, with a coat ending in skirts. It was not pretty, but it was new; and when a lady had got her hat and coat on, she was induced to be a little freer in her speech, and venture upon the oath next above the one she usually allowed herself: which was thought attractive. Our best swearer, beyond all question, was Lady Castlemain, who surprised me more and more with the extent of her accomplishments.

The Queen, who was always learning English, and never getting on, either pretended, or really did not know the force of the extraordinary adjurations which the King put into her mouth. His Majesty had a pastime of making her say one thing and meaning another. He would teach her the most innocent English words, the sounds of which expressed words not so harmless in other languages; and it was his delight to make her say this new kind of catechism, till Katharine suddenly reddened up to her eyes, aimed at him with her handkerchief, and cried out amidst the convulsions of the bye-standers, "Bad-a man!"

In the evening we generally assembled in the great music room, where the tables were laid for cards, and Francesco and others sang to their lutes. The tables glittered with gold; the voices ascended to the sky; and those were not the least entertained, who attended neither to the one nor the other. The Duke of York, who rode all the morning, seemed to do nothing but walk about the room all the evening, at the heels of some lady. He was so heavy, so close, and so obstinate, that I was going to make a simile, that would not have been quite so proper. Sometimes, however, if the lady sat down, he slept. The Duchess, who took after her father, swallowed her objections by

the help of a great appetite for beef and lobster, to say nothing of ale. She cared no more for her shape than the Chancellor. Montagu reckoned one evening, that she sent her gentleman to the sideboard five times before supper, for *pain-de-botarge*. It was said that she was in love with her Master of the Horse, Harry Sidney: and she might have been so; but she was too prudent to run the risk of undoing her honours, and foregoing the chance of being Queen of England. Buckingham generally went about in these evening assemblies, laughing and making laugh. His "loves," precious little souls, did not lie so much in the court as out of it. The boldest were afraid of his incontinence of speech, and the extreme brevity of his attachments. He seemed to think, that his star and garter, and a *bon-mot*, gave him privileges of inconstancy, such as royalty never pretended to; nor did he alter this opinion, till he met with his match in the person of my Lady Shrewsbury, who daring him to do his worst by her own example, produced in him a passion as for another self. The Duke, besides his wit, had a great deal of sound sense, in everything but what related to his conduct; yet he was inferior in genius to Lord Rochester; who though a greater buffoon than he, and not able or perhaps willing to talk so fluently on any grave argument,

had bursts of short and comprehensive eloquence that exhibited a wonderful prematureness of knowledge, and surpassed anything said by the other. He was a great deal younger, had a slender body, and a constitution which he ill used to the last degree; and was always offending and being pardoned by the King, who treated him like a pet schoolboy. He had now however gone to sea, to console himself for the loss of Miss Mallet, and emulate those who had obtained so much glory in the first battle. I remember, the first time I saw him afterwards, he had just succeeded in reconciling the lady's friends to his addresses; and there was he, making her and old Lord Hawley laugh at all their acquaintances for some pretended absurdity or other, himself blushing all the while as much as the lady, as if in hecatics with his animal spirits, and she staring like a weasel, and stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth. He was a greater laughier and mimic than Buckingham himself, though in a lower tone: had a greater address, when he chose it; and always appeared like a young fellow who had come up to the ladies from a dinner party, his head overflowing with wit and wine.

“Grammont, Buckingham, and he, Sedley and Buckhurst, were the delight of the court, and the dread of each other. It was not only Grammont's

wit that availed him, and his high flowing style of life, but his French, which besides being perfect of the kind, had the advantage over one's native tongue, French being the common language of the court. Those who could speak it, found it assist their pretensions to wit, especially such as had none at all: and those who could not, affected to understand it. Miss Stewart talked nothing else. She *Mon-Dieu'd* it at such a rate, that when the rumour was at its height respecting the King's inclination to marry her, Rochester, joking upon his Majesty's taxation-necessities, said he ought to change the motto of his arms to *Droit et Mon Dieu!* This lady still divided the attention of the courtiers. Lady Castlemain reigned: she was '*the*' lady, as Ormond and Hyde used to call her; but the flood of courtiers rolled to and fro between her and Miss Stewart, as the achievements of either lady at cards or dancing attracted them. Castlemain affected to let them go; and was repaid for her liberality by their shrugs and grimaces when they returned. The cue with her Ladyship was to undervalue the other's brains; with Miss Stewart to speak of her royal blood, and the triumph of refined beauty over unpolished. As to French, it was the custom, whenever a prude was introduced among us, if she gave herself airs, to find out whether she was

mistress of it or not. If not, Brisacier, D'Enées, or some other fool, was set upon her, to talk all sorts of nonsense, to which she would listen with a pleased countenance, making frequent acknowledgments of his wit, and always taking care to bow and smile at the worst places. Rochester or somebody else, then went up, and took similar freedoms in English, at which the lady shewing offence, contrition was expressed in form; and the gallant withdrew with a remark, that equal liberties of speech were certainly not to be allowed to every one, and that D'Enées, he saw, was the happy man.

Sometimes the evening party was in the Queen's room, sometimes in the Duchess's, at others in Lady Castlemain's, or Miss Stewart's; and the lesser goddesses had their assemblies. Different subjects of discourse prevailed in different parties; though gallantry and raillery predominated in all. I think there was more talk about dress at Miss Stewart's, than anywhere else. It was there I invented my *pensées*, which it cost Grammont three weeks of meditation to equal. He was known to take people into corners, and ask them whether such and such a knot was better than Esher's. Dishes and wines were much discussed at Miss Wells's, the Duchess not choosing to countenance the topic; but Miss

Price, having eyes which were said to abound with meaning above everybody's, the visitors in her apartments seemed to think themselves obliged to have more meaning in their words, even than at Lady Castlemain's. I used to wonder, for my part, whether a syllable would remain to express a simple idea; or how the parties, next day, could ask for a bodkin or an apple.

Miss Price's eyes were certainly fine. She did not think it necessary to go to sleep with them as others did. She was justly of opinion, that anybody could go to sleep, but that it was not everybody who could look so cleverly when awake. They were of the description of eyes, that are said to look through you, but full of good will withal; extremely earnest and consoling. Miss Howard's contested the victory, in point of earnestness, but you were more afraid of them. Lady Shrewsbury, besides a flushed, doughy face, which always looked as if she had just got up, had sharp brilliant eyes like beads, which had no expression when you looked close. I thought them anything but handsome. Castlemain's were haughty and lamping, not so handsome as her mouth, which however was a little too pouting. I once saw her eating a great stick of barley-sugar, and never could get it out of my head afterwards. She always seemed to me to be finishing it under the rose,

like a girl that has taken sweetmeats to church. However, the lips were as beautiful, as health, plumpness, and a smiling outline could make them. They were so red, that when the sun shone upon them, they absolutely seemed to sparkle like cherries. Her nose was of the handsomest order of the *retroussé*, like Miss Hamilton's. Madame de Bouillon has just such another. Miss Hamilton's eyes were more sensible; so were Miss Fielding's, but the former was a little too much of the Minerva, nor could I think her so handsome in any respect as her family made her out; and Miss Fielding had too large a nose, with a leg (they said) to match. However, I could rather have dared both nose and leg, than loved twenty handsomer nobodies; for she had a mouth full of wit and good nature. I really believe Grammont was jealous of her. Unquestionably he was afraid. He once ventured to say something in dispraise of the superfluous feature in her face, when she raillied him with so much humour, that he was out of countenance for an hour afterwards; a singular catastrophe for him. Unluckily, she pushed her triumph too far, and gave him an opportunity to recover. She was caricaturing him behind his back, and making everybody round them die with laughing, when suddenly detecting her, he affected to draw his

sword, as if upon a man; then dashed back the hilt, exclaiming, "But the eyes are a woman's." He afterwards thought proper to say some flattering things both upon eyes and mouth; and Miss Fielding, from hating him, was thought to be inclined to love. I suspect there was nothing in it. Grammont would have boasted of a much less conquest. Women, conscious of any great defect, are, to be sure, more susceptible than others, of praise; but there was always something short of real refinement in the boasted address of the Chevalier. Grammont should not have praised a woman's eyes after abusing her nose. He should have reconciled her by some allusion, which should have been none, to the defect itself; or shewn, by a delicate undervaluing of it, that it was not in the way. There was the same want of tact in his intercourse with the whole sex. He rallied the sex in general, and then thought to be acceptable to the select few. This may do with ill-tempered, censorious women, who, conscious of a great deal of demerit, are for decrying everybody; but neither the good-natured nor the handsome will like it. Every pretty woman regards herself as the representative of her sex, and as supporting the honours of it in her person. And she is right. Even the censorious part of the sex, if the truth were known, do not like to hear women abused, *as* women. How can they, since

they are women themselves? None like it but such as have given up all pretensions to be regarded as belonging to womankind, like that fellow Christina, of Sweden.*

After all, there were no eyes at court more charming than Miss Reynell's, whom D'Olonne used to admire so much. And her cousin, Jane Killebrew, had almost as fine ones. But the former, looking out in that poetical manner, with a mixture of earnestness and retirement, between her dishevelled locks, was the very picture, Killebrew said, of the heroine of one of Shakespeare's plays. Miss Price had only half the look. Little Reynell would have done for Imogen or Viola. Such faces carried it hollow in the court of Charles the First; and if things go on as seriously as they have begun, I fancy they will again; but our merry monarch, then reigning, loved a bolder look. However, he had a notion, which I take to be a just one, that the quieter faces contained all that the others did, with something besides. But, as he plainly said, he disliked trouble. Constancy was what he greatly desired; I mean, on the lady's part; but he was willing to shut his eyes, provided he saved time at first, and worship afterwards. He was as fond of carping

* *Coquin* is the phrase in the original. *Ce coquin-la de ine.*—*Edit.*

at a sentimental lover as at a bishop. Of all the faces that came to court, I have heard Lord Dorset say (who was a judge), that next to Miss Bagot's,* who had a charming gipsy face, blushing through the brown, none pleased him better than that of the Countess of Ossory. It was not beautiful; it was not striking; but it grew upon you with daily sweetness. There was also an arch look at the corner of the eyes and mouth, which in so good a wife was reckoned provoking. I remember the King said one day when he had been drinking, "Take my word for it, those virtuous women are the d * * st—" I will not complete the sentence, but without meaning to lessen the virtue, the phrase in the royal mouth was the highest of panegyrics. "Ossory," continued he, "was going up the staircase the other day, and met his wife; and I saw her give him such a welcome, by G—d, and kiss his hand with such a transport of thanks in it, that if all the women of the Grand Turk had been melted into one, they could not have done it better. The worst of it is," said his Majesty, "that although she is as impregnable as the devil,—(at least everybody says so, for I never venture upon Ormond's goods, as my brother did) she is no

* Lady Falmouth.

prude,—makes none of the cursed faces of Middleton and those fools, at the least thing one says; but carries all off with such an air of goodness and toleration,—ay, and a twinkle in her eye to boot, as though she could laugh if she chose,—that one absolutely longs to beat her, for being so perfect.”

Whether everybody will agree with the royal idea of perfection, is to be doubted. Perhaps his Majesty saw more in the face of this charming woman, than she was conscious of; perhaps less, for she may have been laughing at, instead of with him. I am sure his pleasantry must have been in one of its very best moods, if the expression of her countenance was anything like what he took it for.

Our entertainments were varied by a theatre, which had been set up in a field at the end of the great flower garden. Nelly came down with Mr Hart and others, and was the life of the company. Lady Castlemain and Miss Warmestre, as well as herself, were considerate enough to keep the secret of my early love to themselves; but I did not forget it. I always felt a tender regard for my giddy friend, who used to shake her tresses in my face; and she had the like for me, though in all innocence. It was said that she was to marry Mr Hart; and it is extraordinary how well she

contrived to make friends and fellow-gigglers of everybody, great and small, and yet give them a sense of her regard for engagements. The fact was, she hated lying, and was good-hearted. Had she been born anywhere but in Lewkner's Lane, she might have been a companion for Lady Os-sory:—and yet I know not; something of her sincerity may have been owing to the plainness of her breeding, however alarming it was in other respects. It must be confessed, that she never got over some parts of it. With a charming face and person (for she was a little Venus in both respects) she put on her clothes as if she had tossed them over her; and her new companions, the players, had probably only revived a tendency, to which she must have had daily encouragement in her infancy,—I mean (with all due respect to the courts of their most serious Majesties King James II, and Louis XIV) she swore. I never heard her swear during her residence with her former namesake, Miss Warmestre; but it is certain she either added or restored the accomplishment to her list, behind the scenes. Mr Pepys rolled his eyes in dismay, when he spoke of it. I forgot to mention, that when I took the letter of poor Dick Smith to Mr Hart's house, in order to give it her, she was from home, nursing her mother; so I left it in his hands. Hart did not conceal her behaviour

on receiving it. She wept floods of tears, went into a sort of mourning, and told everybody the story of the poor boy who had given her stockings in the chilblains. She even told the King that she liked the royal visage the better for resembling the link-boy's; and his Majesty, who loves a fit of tears while he is about it, was pleased to weep at her weeping, and tell her she was a "right hearted honest girl." Next day, she made him laugh ready to burst his sides, at some mimicry; and then turned grave about poor Dick; and so between tears and laughter, they became familiar friends, and she was called the King's little actress. Killegrew said, that Castlemain was the larger one. He called them comedy and tragedy. Miss Stewart was dance, and Miss Wells and others the fiddles. Why her Ladyship was called tragedy, will be seen anon. Notwithstanding the King's kindness to Nelly, there was believed to be no harm in it. Nelly was too sincere to pretend otherwise, had it been so; and his Majesty affected to treat her like a child, especially in the presence of Lady Castlemain; who, to encourage him in his virtue, affected, on her side, to be delighted with his paternity towards this new daughter. She felt differently afterwards; but to shew the footing on which my quondam cousin lived with his Majesty at that time, one story will

suffice. The little actress, who was as agile off the stage as upon it, where she danced to admiration, had got up in a tree one morning, to eat cherries. It was in an orchard which the King had given the actors, on condition of their supplying him every week with a cherry tart, which Nelly was to bring to him on a lawn, before the summer house, dancing all the way. She had struck out a fancy of that sort in a dance at the end of a comedy, where she brought a casket to an Indian prince; and with this performance his Majesty had been wonderfully pleased. The homage of the tart had been exhibited once at Hampton, and with great applause; the little jade twirling about, putting a world of grace into her movements, and bringing the pasty aloft in her hands, as if it had been a thing to worship.

The King had heated himself a little with shooting; and, casting his eyes towards the orchard, he had a mind for some of the cherries. Lord Buckhurst accordingly went forward to get some. His Lordship had his gun in his hand; Miss Stewart was by, with her silver popper; and a little party had gathered together, as soon as his Majesty had done shooting. Buckhurst had proceeded half way, when the King called out to him, to see what bird that was in one of the trees; and whether he could not bring it him. "But

mind," said his Majesty, "if you shoot it, you must try and not hurt the feathers." The end of Nelly's gown was hanging on the tree, and his Majesty took her for a peacock.

Buckhurst comes up. He discerns the peacock to be a lady, and takes it for one of the merry body of the maids. "Ho! my pretty bird," quoth he, "you are the King's property, and must come down. Who is it? which of all our fair doves, or falcons gentle?"

Nelly was hiding her face, and laughing. She knew Buckhurst well. He was a frequenter of the play-house; and furthermore he had been much struck with her conduct towards the memory of poor Dick, so that it was thought he would fain have consoled himself with her company for the coyness of Lord Falmouth's widow.

"Oh, my Lord," said Nelly, putting her rosy face between the boughs, "do you catch birds as the Irishman did, by shaking the tree? I shall fly away."

"Ay," said Buckhurst, "but I have my gun."

"Lord! and must you shoot?" returned Nelly; "what men you must be!"

"The whole court are here," said his Lordship. "Miss Stewart, with her terrible silver, and all; so you see there is no chance. The prettier the dove, the worse for you."

"But I have not got my tart."

"Never mind; you are a singing bird, sweet Nelly, and we will be content this time with the song without the dance. Or, now I think of it, you shall be the tart yourself—singing birds make good pies. How should you like to be in a pasty, with the toes of your slippers peeping out at the top."

"I have a great mind to pelt you all with cherries," quoth the stage Venus; "I'll begin with you as a sample."

"Pelt away. The cherries the birds peck are the sweetest."

The little woodlark and her fowler were in the midst of these pretty speeches, the substance of which was afterwards gathered from the parties, (for it is astonishing how much was made of this adventure, and with how much discourse it furnished our stately souls,) when somebody was heard coming up. It was Tom Vernon, come to say that the King was impatient. Nelly, who had visited the orchard to pluck fruit, not only for herself, but her friends, (Mr Hart intending a general feast that day,) had had a great hamper brought thither, capacious as the generosity of her intentions. "My Lord," said she, "being a singing bird, I must have a cage; and being stouter than singing birds in ordinary, I will try your

prowess, for you shall carry me." "Nothing can be better," replied the gallant, "unless the cage were away, and I had the bird to myself." So down comes Nelly into the basket, and his Lordship and Tom Vernon take her up, and set out for the open field. Nelly said such merry things all the way, that it was with difficulty they acted the part of proper sportsmen who had bagged their game.

The King wondered to see his chamberlain and page coming with a great hamper. He waited with impatience till it could be set before him, fully expecting to see some extraordinary lame bird that had got into the orchard, and been caught so easily.

"'Tis a woodlark," cried Buckhurst, "the finest your Majesty ever saw."

"A woodlark, and in a hamper!" quoth the King; "Odsfish, man, you have made love to so many goldsmiths' wives, you have become a cockney. You don't know a lark from a peacock."

"If it's a peacock," returned Buckhurst, "I'll be a citizen's wife myself."

As he spoke, the hamper was set down, and the lid thrown open, and the King stooping with great earnestness to see what it contained, Nelly took his face in her hand, and shook it. A laugh

ensued, in which his Majesty joined, not without some confusion. The little actress perceived it, and said, "Pardon me, Sir, but I am intoxicated."

"How, Nelly," cried the King, "intoxicated, and so soon in the morning!"

Nelly could not help laughing at the gravity with which this was uttered, and the possibility it implied; for drinking was none of her faults, though greater ladies were accused of it. But she repressed her merriment in an instant.

"Sir," said she, "I am always intoxicated, or I should not behave as I do," (and then dropping a curtesy into the hamper, and holding some of her cherries in her hand, in the prettiest manner in the world)—"it is with your Majesty's goodness."

"Faith, little one," said the King, "you are both merry and wise; and I know not two better things." He graciously assisted her in getting out of her cage, took some of the cherries, and dismissed her with one of his most fatherly pinches on the cheek.

"I tell you what, George," said the King, turning to Buckingham; "your old friends, the republicans, were right so far; there is a natural breeding as well as wit. This little girl shows it,

for all her slovenly gown, and the oaths they tell me of."

"With submission, sir," observed Sedley, "is not the wit itself the breeding?"

"Assisted, perhaps, by goodnature," said Buckhurst.

"And a good stock of confidence," quoth his Grace.

"Very well remarked on all hands," observed the King; "and, as Lauderdale would say, 'vara caractereestical o' the remairkers.'"

Buckingham ironically bowed his thanks. The King and he were a little uneasy on account of some business of Ossory's, and his Grace hated to be told of his old friends, particularly at such times, the Duke of Ormond and his sons having been clear of all connexion with the republicans. The rest could not help looking as pleased as his Grace looked otherwise; for, with all his powers of entertainment, he was more feared than loved at court. Out of doors he was highly popular. For my part, I was never more delighted than at such times, for I had acquired a perfect dislike of him, since the perusal of Sir Philip's manuscript. I wished I had had a right to quarrel with him on account of Miss Randolph; and it was with little patience I heard him accuse

my other mistress of a quality, which he possessed beyond anybody.

As it was inconvenient to Buckingham to be out of favour, he speedily cleared up his countenance; and, knowing that nothing would sooner recover his Majesty's goodwill than a jest, he did the most impudent thing the next evening that I had ever seen. The Chancellor had taken occasion of the calamity that was now wasting the city of London, to lecture the King on his way of life, which he said was "a tempting of Providence, ungrateful towards it, after having restored him, and for aught he knew, a main cause of the evils poured out upon his kingdom." These charges, though the King always listened to Clarendon's lectures with benignity, and was willing to admit that there was more truth in them than there ought to be, (perhaps to neutralize their effect, and stop the Chancellor's mouth,) his Majesty thought, at such a moment, very hard. He replied, with some warmth, "that every one had his faults; that luxury and enormity did not lie wholly on the side of gallantry; that it was paying an ill compliment to heaven, to suppose that it would slay thousands of harmless people for the fault of one man, or for one fault more than another; and that, for aught he knew, it was more angry with pride and

stomach in a man (laying an emphasis on that equivocal term), than with faults of any other description; nay, he had good reason, from authority too sacred to be lightly mentioned, to be sure of it." The Chancellor, according to his custom, begged his Majesty's pardon, if he had said anything unbecoming the most humble and dutiful of his subjects. "He did not pretend that he was without faults, though he could not consider them, either with reference to their nature, or to his own humble condition, as of the least importance, compared with the single fault of carelessness in his Majesty, to which his Majesty's very virtues, perhaps, too much inclined him; but as he thought no trouble too great to undergo for his Majesty's service, as might be seen by his coming so often from Twickenham, in that crippled state, when he ought rather to be in his bed,—so no unkind words, even from the lips of which he stood most in awe, and from which he certainly had not looked for the condescension of a personal affront, (and here he grew very red) should hinder him from discharging those duties of zeal and affection, which had commenced in his Majesty's infancy, with the approbation of his blessed father, and could have no excuse for ceasing till it pleased God and his Majesty to put

an end to a situation, for which he was more fitted by the honesty of his nature, than the address of it."

"And so he went on," said the King, (for the matter was discussed as usual at the supper-table) "winding his speeches about me, till—you know the foolish way I have of taking pity on everybody; and so I felt ashamed of being angry with his goodness and his gout any longer; and so he gave me a great big volume of his writing to look over; and he is to come to-morrow, to know my opinion of it."

"We'll read a page of it a-piece," said Arlington, "and let your Majesty know the heads of it."

"Do, prythee," returned the King; "but don't play me a trick, Harry, as you did upon the Tangier papers, and make me quote something to him he never said. All the fat will be in the fire else."

"Elegant!" said Buckingham aside; "but as true as the gospel, and a marvellous happy metaphor. Clarendon frying! Methinks I hear the sound of twenty kitchens.—And so, sir, your Majesty forgave him!"

"Yes," answered Charles, "I did. There's nothing uncommon in that, I fear."

"Clearly not, sir," said Buckingham maliciously; "'tis what you always do."

"Always do!" re-echoed his Majesty: "I would not have you think I do it on account of the man's strength, but of his weakness. 'Tis painful to see a hobbling old man, a wise and an honest servant withal, almost lying before one's feet, and not forgive him: but I own 'tis a little tiresome."

"If he contented himself with lying before your Majesty's feet," said Buckingham, "it would not be amiss; but to lie behind your back, may be considered not quite so pardonable."

Some relations were then given of angry and disrespectful sayings of Clarendon, concerning the royal way of life, which his Majesty was obliged to pretend that he disbelieved. Buckingham artfully admitted, that there was probably a good deal of exaggeration in the reports; and then, with double cunning, proceeded to throw doubts on some parts of them, which Charles knew to be true. What particularly chagrined the King, was the intimation that Clarendon affected a mastery over all his movements; that the royal will, according to the Chancellor's shewing, was unable to effect anything, even to the postponement of a meeting, or the security of a party on the water, if the "cancellarian will," (as Buckingham called it) chose to determine otherwise; in short, that Charles was still a boy, and Clarendon his peda-

gogue. The Chancellor was represented as giving ludicrous descriptions of him, under the title of 'the great boy, hankering after the maids;'—"and all this folly," concluded Buckingham in a tone of indignation, "comes from an enormous old fellow who is not averse to pleasure, but past it; nay, who takes out as much as he can, in swilling and gormandizing; and if Merry St. Andrew says true, preaches secresy to my lady's maid in so edifying a manner, that she repeats the sermon to all the puritans of her acquaintance. Then the man has a very plethora of house and land, hankers most indecently after fees, lays his hand on every waif he can think of, be it the King's or church's; yet gobbles and reddens like a turkey-cock, if you touch a stick in his premises, though it be for the King's service, and the King's own; as witness the fright he gave to fat little Pepys about the oaks; but if you come before him for a seal to your warrant, be it for lord or lady, ho! my masters! who so scrupulous as he! Hey? What? An estate given away, and I have only four! A gift to a charming woman, and no respect to my gorbellied hypocrisy? Lord in heaven! could not the King do as I do? Drink and be d—d to him, and give nothing to anybody? 'Nobody' is the phrase vulgar, but we are not of that breeding. Oh Master Kingston, sir, these

be 'flesh-quakes,' as my friend Ben Johnson has it, enough to try the stoutest of us; so, vacate, my masters; we would endure our agony in private. Here, Molly, *atque facetum*; has my Lady retired? Yes, my Lord. Have the footmen gone to prayers? My Lord, they have. Is that drunken fellow, Dixon, surely in bed? He is, my Lord. Then bring us our sack-posset."

By this time the King was rolling in his chair, and another blow given to the approaching downfall of the Chancellor. The next evening Clarendon makes his appearance according to appointment. There had been many determinations at the supper table to affront him; and, bold as he was, he might reasonably have been startled to see the numerous assemblage of wits and courtiers who made a sort of avenue for him towards the King's closet. They received him on his appearance with an excess of silence. Arlington, with his sour smile and his cunning eyes, pressed his hand upon his heart, as he made his bow. Ashley bowed down to the ground. Buckingham behaved easily and gracefully, as if with real respect. The greater number of us were partly interested, and partly cowed by his appearance. I, for one, though I did not like him, thought him treated harshly, considering his long service and his good intentions; and could not help feeling

something like veneration at sight of his grey hairs and feeble step, however accompanied with pride and swelling. As to himself, he addressed some indifferent words to an acquaintance or two as he entered, and then bowing sternly on either side, seemed prepared to meet any affront that might be hazarded, with all his ire and dignity. Clifford changed colour, and looked as if he could have bearded him the more; but nobody ventured. The bows for the most part were made with real courtesy, and the bravadoes of the overnight vanished before the aspect of a man of eloquence and authority, who was grandfather to the young princes, and had over-awed a court from its infancy. Above all, Buckingham's manner was looked upon as a desertion of the cause; and we were prepared to lay it to the account of a want of courage, of which he was already suspected. But he redeemed it in a way, that seemed to render it only the more bold and insulting.

The ante-room was one of the largest in the palace; the door of the King's closet stood open at the further end (the weather being very hot); and Buckingham had placed himself at the very farthest point from the closet, to wit, close to the entrance, as if purposely to receive the Chancellor with respect. His Lordship, proceeding stoutly and painfully with his gout, had, however,

no sooner commenced his passage, and was returning our bows, than we perceived Buckingham behind him, imitating his manner with an extravagance so impudent, and yet so grounded in truth, that it was with difficulty we refrained from laughing out loud. The proud eye and puffed cheeks of Clarendon, the general *width* of his manner, if I may so call it; his extremely grave acknowledgments (as if giving us no more credit for our courtesy than we deserved); the leaden weight of the feet, as if scraped along, instead of lifted; and the occasional nod to a friend (extremely ludicrous and sullen), presented a *double* of the gouty and angry Chancellor, as exact as if Nokes had done it; and the caricature being thus preceded by the original in person, unwillingly and yet in dudgeon, the effect was alarming, to those who saw them both coming. Some of them in their efforts to resist laughter were forced to turn away; and none but those whom they had passed, and who were rolling and gaping with their efforts, dared to look towards the King; who, for his part, seeing what was approaching, was fain to get behind the door.

Clarendon observing those who turned away, guessed at what was going on. He reddened like scarlet, but was wise enough not to take any notice. However, on entering the King's closet,

after paying his respects to his Majesty, he addressed him in these words* :—

“ Before entering, sir, upon the business which has brought me here with this gentleman, Mr Coventry, I humbly crave your Majesty’s patience in behalf of an old servant of your government; and an extreme and passionate well-wisher to your royal person, while I say a word or two in his behalf.” His Lordship was much agitated.

“ Certainly, my Lord,” said the King, glad to have his thoughts diverted from Buckingham’s mimicry; “ certainly,—who is it? You know you have only to speak;—I mean, an old servant, in whose favour you think fit to interest yourself — a — hum — Who is it, good my Lord?”

“ Sir, this old servant, old and nighly worn out, but never, I will be bold to say, more worthy of your Majesty’s protection (and I speak of him in this gentleman’s presence the rather because he is an impartial witness, not too much inclined in the person’s favour, and may be considered as an honourable representation of publicity without the indecorum of it)—is myself. Nay, sir, in God’s name, and in the name of humanity, which I know it is not in the nobleness of your nature to

* What follows here, like the close of Cromwell’s speech in the second volume, is given by the MS. in English.—*Edit.*

resist, I beg you a moment to hear me.—Sir, it is an unhappiness of the situation which I have the honour of holding under your Majesty, and of the conscience which it exacts above all others, that I often suppose myself under the necessity of offering to your Majesty my poor advice and opinion relative to matters which it would be an impertinence to touch upon under any circumstances of less duty or compulsion: and perhaps it is my further misfortune, as it must of necessity be that of all conscientious servants in a like office, who are not exempt from the common frailties of mankind (which is what I never pretended to be), that in the honest and trembling fervour of my zeal (for I could not disguise, if I would, that I speak of what is near my heart with a certain heat and emotion), I may exaggerate or even mistake some points on which your Majesty is kind enough to hear me speak, and so upon the matter fall justly under correction; which I call on your Majesty to testify I have ever received with a willingness and a submission, becoming a dutiful subject, and at least proportionate to the extent of my fault. But, sir, there is one thing of which I earnestly entreat, and implore, and I may even say demand your Majesty to be persuaded (for love makes it an honour to the highest to have justice demanded of them, as a thing which it is not in their natures to deny); and that

is, that whatsoever I think it my duty to say at any time, touching your Majesty's other servants and advisers, more especially if it be in the way of objection, or heat, or scornfulness, I say it before their faces, and not behind their backs: and I call upon your Majesty to bear witness that I do so, having too often indeed given occasion to your Majesty's just rebuke, for being so far transported by my natural openness into a forgetfulness of everything but my love to your welfare; and assuredly it is an indiscretion of which I should never have been guilty, had I been guilty otherwise, or confined myself to the safe malice of backbiters and mimics, than whom (saving your Majesty's princely willingness to construe everything for the best) I do not know a more accursed generation; all which being the case, and my heat and openness being as well known as their secrecy and malignancy, I do hope and trust, and implore your Majesty to allow me to expect, that if I can do so much justice to them, it shall at least never be suspected of me that I can condescend to their cowardly audacity, or take those liberties with your Majesty's person and proceedings, which, as they are guilty of themselves, so I have too good reason to know, they are abundantly willing to charge upon others."

Mr Coventry said, that all this was spoken with

a heat, vehemence, and a sort of tempest of sincerity, which would have been irresistible to any man, much more to the easy prince who stood before his old servant. Charles, greatly confused, in vain attempted to stop the torrent by murmurs of doubt and re-assurance; and at the close of it, he could think of nothing but putting an end to his own and the Chancellor's uneasiness. He told him, "he believed every word he uttered, as he always did; that he never fancied he said a word behind any one's back, which he would not say, even if he had not, to his face; and that, as he (the King) made a point of hearing nothing to his 'friend and instructor's' prejudice (!)—for so he must ever call him,—so he begged him to consider, that tale-bearers were not always to be trusted, even against those whose tongues were not so honest as his own. In fine, all parties (his Majesty was sure) would be the better for believing as little harm of one another as possible; and if idle men sometimes took liberties with their betters, out of a notion that they were not enough regarded, it was the business of the prince to shew that such liberties were taken in vain; and he would do it, and that forthwith; of which his Lordship should presently carry away testimony."

And the King, not having time to break it, was as good as his word; for the conference,

upon which the Chancellor came, was no sooner ended, than the door being thrown open, his Majesty came forth with him, helping him along in his gout, like a son, Clarendon deprecating so much goodness, and his Majesty persisting in it with a cordiality which put all the courtiers on their reverence, adding, out loud, that "he could do no less for one who had supported so many real burdens for him." Next day Charles was ashamed to look Buckingham in the face; and this triumph of Clarendon's was the worse for him in the end.

The Chancellor, though he expected assiduous court to be paid to himself, seldom went anywhere from home. He alleged his gout, and multiplicity of business, as the reasons; and they would have been good excuses for any other man; but, unquestionably, both pride and luxury were among his detainers, though he did not chuse to think so. He might have been as luxurious and as lame as he pleased, if he had not been proud. The more gout the better, if he had but returned visits a little oftener. Gout was what everybody looked forward to, who did not walk as the King did, or ride like the Duke. But it is not to be denied, that Clarendon was puffed up with pride as well as canary; and that he sat in his gouty chair, as if it had been the throne of the realms. To venture within a mile of his toe or his pretensions,

was an offence anti-papal. Everybody was to give way to him, as patiently as a pack of suitors in Chancery; and while he refused a vote or a seal, for any other person's convenience, with a conscientiousness that would have been provoking in any minister, considering the nature of the court, he resented the least inquiry into his gains, or doubt of his motives, with a bluster, that undoubtedly looked more like the ostentation of innocence, than the truth of it. From the gusts of his anger, nobody was secure, not even the King in council. He had reason to refer to them, as proofs of his candour, and he was enough aware of the impression they must make, to follow them up with apologies to those above him. But catch him who could at an apology to an inferior! And then these inferiors, though perhaps truly such, compared with the height of his own power and genius, were often men of importance and ability; yet he would not scruple, in the King's presence, to pour on them a storm of vituperation; calling them, "fellows and pretenders," and wondering at their "impudence;" though the offence, which he especially undertook to be enraged at, was the freedom they ventured upon in the royal presence! All this shewed him to be a man of so much more will than self-knowledge, and so filled with humours, which he confounded with virtues, that all

classes of men began to doubt which was which, and to give him no credit for differing with the greatest enormities, seeing that he did it with as enormous a blindness of his own. He complained, that his rivals, after depriving him of all real share in the government, attributed to him the most odious of their own measures: but on the other hand, they referred to his pride and luxury, and the little ceremony with which he treated every one, as proofs positive of his despotic propensities; and the republicans joined in the testimony, with all the bitterness of men whom he had opposed and scorned from the beginning. In short, the republicans hated him, for his being a monarchy-man; the monarchy-men for his talking of law; the Cromwellites, for his calling Cromwell "a mechanical fellow;" the Presbyterians for his being Episcopalian; the Episcopalians, for his compounding with the Presbyterians; the placemen, for his meddling; the saints for his luxury; the sinners, for his lectures of them; and all men for his pride. The King speedily found all this inconvenient as well as offensive; and the humiliation his Majesty felt at the submissions into which the Chancellor's eloquence was continually beguiling him, had no mean hand in hastening his downfall.

For my own part, I once had such personal testimony of the Chancellor's haughty and irritable

manners, that I was inclined to agree with anything said against him; yet, seeing him thus treated by Buckingham and others, and meeting him a day or two afterwards at Lord Ossory's, he talked so agreeably, was so pleasant with the ladies and the children, and addressed in particular to myself so eloquent a regret of his own youthful time of life, interspersing it with anecdotes of Ben Jonson and Suckling, and painting such masterly portraits of other celebrated men of his acquaintance, that I could have heard him talk for a week, and let him reign for ever. He ended with enquiring after Sir Philip Herne, whom he had met at Lord Ossory's, and of whom, he understood, that I "had the honour to be the friend; for," said he, "by all that I hear of him, he is a man that Lord Falkland himself would have loved." This eulogy on Sir Philip, and the address with which he appeared not to ascribe to me any merit of my own, while he implied it in the highest degree, gave him a complete conquest over the page of the presence. From that moment I became one of his warmest advocates. It was only after a lapse of years, and on looking back with a more experienced eye, that I came to think of him with my present impartiality.

Lord Ossory's family and the Hamiltons were much together, living almost in the same house at

Whitehall. It was there Sir Philip saw Clarendon, who would be carried in his sedan to visit the Duke of Ormond's son, when he went nowhere else. It was there also he saw Grammont, who was paying his addresses to Miss Hamilton; and herein lies the secret of the dislike which the Chevalier took to my friend. Miss Hamilton did not like Grammont enough, and she liked Sir Philip too well. It is true, she married the Frenchman, but it was out of perversity. Grammont, at the period of his marriage, was reckoned the most brilliant man in the court circle. Miss Hamilton was accounted the most discerning of the ladies. Their mutual vanity was piqued;—his, to make a conquest of her, which could only be done in the most honourable manner; and hers, to shew that she could have him if she would. She accordingly kept him waiting so long, and seemed in the meanwhile so much inclined to waive her fastidiousness in favour of Herne, that it is reported the Chevalier only married her at last by dint of a memorandum from the point of her brother's sword. Miss Hamilton had sense and penetration; nor do I believe she would have married the Chevalier, if her honour had not been concerned in it. I have heard, that when he vexed her after their marriage with one of his shabby infidelities, and had the impudence to revenge her complaints of it, by

taunting her with marrying a man who had been so unsuccessful with her equals, she was provoked to say, that the most amiable man in England had possessed her heart, though she had not had the good fortune to touch his.

Respecting the man thus truly designated, I was now becoming extremely anxious. I had waited to hear from him a whole fortnight beyond the time he mentioned; the plague had increased to such an extent, that the court, afraid of remaining any longer at Hampton, were about to remove to Salisbury; and as Sir Philip intended, when he left the vessel, to go to his agent in the city—a house in the very thick of it—I made up my mind to shew that I deserved his friendship, by going thither to look after him.

On my asking leave of absence, his Majesty demurred. He said, he had designed to send me into France with Lord Buckhurst, on a message of compliment to the French King; and that, in connection with that object, as well as to shew his sense of my behaviour on board his brother's ship in the late battle, and the general regard they both had for me, he had resolved to make me a Baronet.

I almost started at the sound of the word, which highly flattered my vanity; but I felt as if I had drawn my sword in a new cause, and was not to put it up again. I therefore represented to his

Majesty, with all gratitude and humility, that although my family was old, I possessed but a small patrimony, insufficient, I thought, to support the honour of which he was pleased to suppose me worthy; and that, with regard to the message into France, as he did not intend to dispatch it for a month or six weeks, I trusted that nothing but death would hinder me from being back by that time, if his Majesty still thought fit to honour me with his gracious intentions.

The King said, that "as to money, poor Berkeley, of whom I sometimes reminded him, (and his Majesty truly added, that he could not say a kinder thing of me, for he had a surprising regard for that nobleman,) had not a foot of land, when he made him an Earl; and Harry Bennett had almost as little, for he called himself Arlington after no greater territory than a farm. A King's servants grew rich, if they were deserving; and it would go hard if, between us, we could not support the lustre of the Bloody Hand."

This "between us," flattered me so much, that I had nothing to reply in objection. In fact, though I thought it became me to hesitate, I should have been sorry to have been taken at my word; so I was preparing to receive my honour with due grace, when his Majesty told me, that in short, he had set his mind upon it: "for," said he,

“ I have been forced to make Clifford a baronet, ‘ and t’other man,’ and I am resolved to have a baronet or two of my own, especially as I make no more lords : so you see, Ralph, you will oblige me in it, as well as yourself.”

I now wished I had not contested the point at all, since I was to be a set-off against “ t’other man ;” and yet I should have been sorry not to have been made use of : so ungracious, sometimes, is the graciousness of kings, and so little disposed to be vain the vanity of their servants. Niceness, indeed, is not the fault of vanity at any time. What is the reason that we are so willing to have merits imputed to us, and to wear honours which at bottom are none at all ? I have heard Sir Philip vindicate the propensity, on grounds far from dishonourable to human nature, though few of the persons vindicated would suspect they had them. He said, “ that the proudest and most ambitious of mankind,—nay, even the most arbitrary,—had a principle of social regard in their errors ; and that the same principle, well understood, would be the salvation of humanity. We are all of such consequence to one another, that in some mode or other we endeavour to make ourselves conscious of it. It is an instinct so strong, that it leads us to attract regard by a title or a ribbon, when we can do it in no better way.”

I recollected this observation of Sir Philip's, and ceased to blush. But my friend, as it turned out, furnished me with a still pleasanter feeling, connected with my new honours; at least, my friendship did, and it could not have done it, but for such a man. The King, perceiving me bent upon leave of absence, was anxious to know what took me away, concluding it was a lady. I told him the secret: upon which, he cried with fervour, "Gad so! A true friend, and at court! Poor Berkeley was just such another. Ralph, you shall be a baronet, if only for this! Sir What-d'ye-call-him, in the story, was not a better friend; and I am resolved to give a title to a disinterested virtue, and on that very score. So you are to lay it to the account of your friend, and not of my cursed caballers."

"When I come back then, sir, perhaps your Majesty—"

"No: not when you come back: you shall have it now: anybody can be rewarded after a good deed: you shall have your reward first, Ralph, 'and bear a charmed life.' We will send you into the plague, as mothers send their midshipmen to war; with a pocket full of encouragement. So God speed you; and mind that we are not forced to keep your virtue at a distance, when you come back, with snuff and vinegar. Don't bring

the plague on us with your friendship. Besides, Buckhurst will be waiting."

I could not help fancying, that there was more in this bestowal of a title on me, than appeared: but perhaps there was not. If there was, my Lord Churchill, or the Duchess of Cleveland, might be able to tell the secret. At all events, neither the secret nor the title was of my seeking. I should say nothing about the matter, were it not for an inconvenient habit of candour, which my friend helped to fix upon me. There were plenty of persons, who had a better claim than I had; but then, as the King said, if he once began with shewing his gratitude on the right and left of him, there would be no end of it. Titles would be as "plenty as blackberries." To give a baronetcy to a young fellow like myself, was extending no undue encouragement. The King's will and pleasure was reason enough, had there been no embassy on foot; and a secretary of embassy to the French court had surely a right to such a feather in his cap. In fine, as Killigrew told me, I was at once pleased that I had got the title, and vexed to think that it was not unequivocally owing to my virtues; "which," said he, "is the fault of your Puritan nurture. It gave you a conscientious vanity (an odd phrase), of which you have never got rid."

However, I was of a stock that would have warranted far higher titles, had it remained rich enough to support them; so in a day or two, with an order on the King's casket for a thousand pounds (a marvellous sum) which convinced me the lady had something to do with it, and a world of praise from the lady herself for my heroism, which really seemed to put a new light in her eyes, I left court on my adventure.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE I went into the city, I thought it my duty to make enquiries in every quarter where news of Sir Philip might have been heard. I did so, but in vain. I found out the residence of Mr Waring, who was in the habit of hearing from him regularly, but the expected intelligence had not arrived the last time, and Mr Waring himself had been absent from home for some days, probably on the like search. I therefore proceeded without further delay to the agent's.

My course took me down Holborn, and so into Aldersgate. I had yet seen nothing of the infected places, except what the commencement of my journey had shown me on the borders of them. This was startling enough, for grass was growing in some of the most frequented thoroughfares, and an awful silence prevailed, interrupted only by dimly heard outcries, which I took for the

noise of some mob at a distance. I had heard of the red crosses marked on the doors, and the inscriptions of "Lord have mercy upon us," but the sight of them was much more appalling than the fancy. An occasional shop was open, and passengers now and then appeared, who seemed to avoid each other. I understood this well, for I had heard the most-frightful stories of deaths caused by the simplest contact; and though my physician had told me to indulge my natural cheerfulness as much as possible, on account of its being one of the best of preservatives, I could not help giving way to those who passed me. I had furthermore, by his advice, armed myself with aromatics, and had vinegar enough about me to make me feel very abominable.

On entering Holborn, I was surprised to see all the people walking in the middle of the streets. They had done so, in fact, in the other streets, but the narrowness of the latter had hindered me from noticing it. The silence was still remarkable, broken only by those remote sounding cries of which I have spoken, by the noise of a few coaches, and the sound of a church bell, as if it were some rainy Sunday evening. It was noon, however: not a drop of rain had fallen for weeks: the air was sultry to the last degree; and the fires that were burning here and there, though lit on

purpose, and of use in purifying it, added to the sense of oppressiveness. Yet the people had their coats buttoned up, and their necks muffled, as if they feared every breath of the atmosphere.

I had heard of a man who went about crying, "Yet forty days, and London will be destroyed;" and of another, who, half naked, and never stopping to answer questions, hurried unceasingly through the streets, looking frightfully before him, and exclaiming, "O the Great and the Dreadful God!" I saw nothing of this; nor were the looks of the passengers, as far as I noticed, different from what they usually appeared in that careful part of the town; only they were more silent; and now and then the general attention was directed to the bustle at some door, where a person in sick clothes was brought out to be taken into a coach. But nobody stopped. I saw one of these persons go by in a coach, for I could not help looking in. It was a woman, as pale as the sheet that wrapped her. She had her mouth open, and cast a dull glazed look at me; but I quickly turned my eyes. The stream of passengers was now and then painfully interrupted by some one in liquor, not always a man; nor was it possible to know, whether the drunken person was afflicted or merely brutal. One of these, a woman, after reeling every body out of the way, fell with such

weight on the ground, that I instinctively ran to pick her up; when the rest cried out to me not to touch her, and presently there was a call of "Cart! Cart!" Upon which the cart made its appearance, that took people of this sort to the pest-house. It is supposed, that many persons got dreadfully punished in this way for their intoxication; for the cart itself was enough to infect them. The sickness exhibited itself, sometimes in the universal languor of the frame, sometimes in raging fevers, and often in boils and blains, which caused the sufferer the acutest agony. It was brought from Holland by infected goods; and detained by dirt and by narrow streets. Those stood the best chance of escaping, who kept themselves cleanest, and were of the liveliest temper.

But what I had seen in this great open thoroughfare, however awful for its silent multitude, all avoiding the houses, was nothing to what I encountered in a lane, turning from Newgate street, into Little Britain. The riotous taverns and public houses, of which I had been told, I did not witness anywhere, though doubtless they existed. I fancied, by the noise, that I might have passed one upon Snowhill; but there was none of that riot and swearing at open windows, which in this desperate situation of things, it was both too shocking to think of and too easy to believe.

The worst noise I heard, after the outcry for the cart, was one of violent lamentation and shrieking in a house shut up, with a watchman standing before it. The people however took no notice; the watchman took none; and I passed on with the rest, feeling, for the first time, what it was to grow disregardful of misery, or to force myself to be so, by reason of its very excess. This was surely dreadful enough; and yet, to me, it was little to what I am about to mention.

The lane into which I turned, was one of the most silent. The houses were all shut up, and yet I did not observe a single watcher at the doors. (Watchers were people stationed at sick houses to see that nobody went out.) By this I concluded, that the inmates were all dead, which very much astonished me. I thought it strange, that death should have proceeded in so regular a manner with a whole street. By what I heard afterwards, I concluded, that the greater number of the inhabitants had quitted their business, and fled into the country; while the watchers being few in number, and not overlooked, had most probably, at the time of my passing, gone to take their refreshment, perhaps had abandoned their posts altogether, or gone in doors and taken possession without leave; for numbers of such stories were told of them. Be this as it may, a great morta-

lity had taken place in that street, and death was still in it. I was walking on the shady side of the way, to avoid the terrible dead heat (for there seemed a mortality in the very sunshine,) when I heard great cries on the sudden, in a house a little beyond, on the other side of the way, and, (the door being, I suppose, already open) I saw a figure, like a man in his grave-clothes, burst forth, with his family at his heels, crying "Father! Father!" He fled up the lane, brandishing his arms and clothes, and I lost sight of them in the turning. I was pondering on this spectacle, when I observed a man coming towards me, on my own side, very quiet though dejected, who passed me without noticing what he had seen. I was not sure that I had come the way I had been directed, and turning about just as he had passed me, I asked him the name of the street. He looked right in my eyes, with one of those sudden and equivocal smiles which drunken men sometimes put on, though nothing could be staidier than his movements, and said, "Don't you know the name of this street? This is Hell street." In my confusion at this answer, I was beginning to move off without a word, as we do when deranged people address us, when he burst into peals of laughter, so loud and reiterated, as to bring two or three people to the windows, but they said nothing,

and almost as instantly withdrew. I was then moving on, when he called to me in a rational, and very moving tone, "Sir, sir—I say." I could not help turning round, upon which he came nearer, and said with tears in his eyes, "Every one dead, sir; six in the family with their mother; I have seen them all put into the pit." "You afflict me, sir," said I, "beyond measure; I feel heartily for your troubles." He looked stupified, and as he was beginning to smile again, and (to say the truth) I felt both horror and fear, I again moved off, gradually increasing the rapidity of my progress. On reaching the turning of the way, where it rounded off, I could not resist a desire to look back, when I saw him standing in the middle of the street, thrusting his right hand violently into the air, and making signs for me with the other to return. I hastened to get out of his sight.

I know not how those who were more concerned in these miseries than I was, could have borne even the recollection of them, if it had not been for the eventual good done to the city, both by this great calamity and the one that followed it. To be sure, time does wonders, and great calamities, by the very weight of their blow, harden and deaden us into an endurance of them: otherwise, if I, a mere chance passenger, young

and in good health, was so affected as I was by lighting on one or two of these spectacles, how could the thousands of families who lost relations every week in the most frightful manner, recover the ordinary tone of existence, and go on, bartering and feeding, on the spots where such agonies were undergone! Thousands died quietly, but thousands also died violently. I mean raving. Many pitched themselves from windows, or went and plunged into the river; many, it is thought, were tumbled into the frightful pits before they were dead; and there were stories, for which the callousness induced by the sight of misery obtained credit, of old nurses and others, who caused or hastened the deaths of many by suffocation, in order to possess themselves of their goods. If the plague, as some think likely, should never again return to our widened streets and cleaner habits, the blessing will turn out to have been worth the purchase; and really mankind have so little reflection as a body, and are so insensible to ordinary warnings, however repeated, that some desolating and dreadful wretchedness seems occasionally necessary, to give them a proper sense of the desirableness of alteration. It is almost a pity on this account, that no lives were lost in the great fire. The fire seems to have come, merely to finish what the plague demanded, and secure us wider

and healthier streets; but nobody's life having been the worse for it, at least by burning, people go on, having their children roasted, and their wives found mangled among smoking ruins, purely, as it should seem, from want of being able to put two ideas together; that of a fire now, and a fire at some other time. I suppose nothing under a second conflagration will sufficiently scorch their powers of reflection: and even that will probably not do it without an act of parliament. If an earthquake takes place under an inconsiderate government, we see, by all history, that nothing is done to prevent a repetition of its effects. Men build over it again, and their grandchildren perish in the ruins.

If human nature, owing probably as much to the ignorance as well as to the wickedness of the parties, sometimes put on a very ugly aspect during this calamity of the plague, it had the best effect of adversity in brightening it and rendering it beautiful at others. As I have noticed some examples of the former, and mentioned a very distressing incident that came under my own observation, I shall here record an adventure, better than any in my old friends the romances; for if not quite so romantic, it was true. I have heard of others, some of them more touching, such as mothers voluntarily shutting themselves up from

their children to die alone, brides refusing a visit from the bridegroom, and many accounts of friends and faithful servants, who behaved in a similar way to the heroine of my story; but as I could speak of those only from general report, I select the following, as being nearer to my own experience, for it was told me by a kinsman of one of the parties, a very respectable gentleman in an office under the Commander-in-Chief. *

A young merchant in the city was seized with the symptoms of the disorder, just as the day had been fixed, which was to unite him with his mistress. Some difficulties had been thrown in the way of the union by a crabbed guardian; and many hours had not elapsed from their removal, and everything been settled, (which the lover hastened to see done with the greatest impatience,) when the terrible spots appeared, that were to cut him off from communion with the uninfected. It is supposed, that the obstacles in the first instance, and the hurry afterwards, threw his blood into a ferment, which exasperated the attack. He wished to make light of the matter, and to go about his ordinary concerns; but the

* *Le Général* is the phrase in the MS. It was the designation at that time to express the officer mentioned in the text.—*Edit.*

strangeness of his sensations, and the thought of the peril that he might bring to his mistress, soon made him give up this pretension. He said, that his horror at first inclined him to cry aloud, to tear his hair, and dash himself against the wall of the room; but the thoughts of her again controlled him, and he resolved to go through everything as patiently as might be, lest he should add to his chances of losing her. He sent her a message to that effect, bidding her be of good heart; and then, in a passion of tears, which he resolved should be his last, but which, he said, seemed to give him a wonderful kind of humble support, betook himself to his prayers, and so to his bed.

He was soon left alone with none but an old nurse to attend him; but as he did not sleep, and the good woman, observing him tranquil, slept a great deal, he thought next day he might as well rise and go into the garden for a little air.

The garden, though in the city, was a very pretty one, and as it abutted on some grounds, belonging on one side to a church, and on the other to a field where they shot at butts, was removed both from sight and noise, and might be called even solitary. He found himself alarmingly weak; and the air, instead of relieving, seemed to bring the weight of an oven with it; but there was grass and roses; and he thought it would add to

the grace of his memory with her he loved, if he died in so sweet a spot, rather than in the house. Besides, he could not bear to think of dying, in what he hoped would have been his bridal bed. These reflections made him again shed tears in spite of himself, and he lay down on a bench under a tree, wishing he could melt away in that tender despair.

The young gentleman guessed that he had lain in this way a good hour, during which he had a sleep that a little refreshed him, when he heard himself called by his name. He thought it was the nurse, and looked towards the house, but saw nobody. The name was repeated twice, the last time with the addition of an epithet of tenderness, which he knew could come from no such person. His heart began to beat; and his ear guiding him truly to the voice, which he now recognised, he saw, on the top of the wall nearly opposite him, and under a tree which overhung it from the outside, his beloved mistress, holding with one hand on a bough, and with the other supporting herself in the posture of one who intended to come down. "Oh, Richard!" said she, "what a blessing to find you here, and nobody to hinder me! I have cheated them, and slunk away,—my love! my life!"

Our lover said, these last little words had a wonderful effect on him. With all her tenderness, his betrothed bride had never yet indulged it so far as to utter such "conjugal" words, (that was his phrase). He said, they seemed to give her a right to join him; and they filled him with such love and gratitude, that the very languor of his illness became confounded with a bewitching pleasure.

He confessed, that the dread of her being infected, though it still recurred to him, was much fainter than before. However, he the more thought it was his duty to urge it, and did so. But the lady had no such dread. She had come on purpose to brave it. In vain he spoke as loudly as he could, and rose up and began to drag his steps towards her; in vain he made signs to her not to descend. "Dearest Richard," said she, "if you cannot help me down, it is but an easy jump, and do you think anything will induce me to go back? I am come to nurse you and make you happy."

"You will die," said the lover in a faint voice, now arrived within hearing, and still making signs of refusal.

"Oh no: Heaven will bless us," cried she: "I will *not* go back, mark me; I will not indeed;

I cannot, much less now I have seen you, and in that sick gown. But I see you cannot help me down. You are unable. Therefore I come."

With these words she made the jump, and the next minute was supporting him in her arms. She put her arms round him, and took his repelling hand into hers, and raising herself kissed him on the mouth, saying "Now I belong to you. Let me seat you on the bench, and get you some drink. I am your wife now, and your dear servant, and your nurse."

Their eyes were filled with tears, and the lover could only lift his head towards heaven, as much as to say, that, "they should at all events live there." Not being able to reach the bench, he sat down in a thicket of roses. The young lady went to get him some drink, and returned with the news that she had waked the astonished nurse, and sent her to tell her guardian where she was. Nobody expected him to venture to come and fetch her, and he did not.

He told the gentleman who had these particulars from him, that this behaviour of his betrothed bride, put him in a state so new and transporting, that he conceived an alteration of his blood must have taken place, very speedily after her return from the house: for though he could hardly bear his delight, he began manifestly to

get better within an hour afterwards. The lady never received the infection. Their friends said she would, and that two would die instead of one. The physician prophesied otherwise. Neither the lover nor his mistress, however, would quit their retreat, till all doubt of the possibility of infecting others was more than done away.

In the course of six weeks, they were man and wife: and my acquaintance told me, not as many days ago, that they were still living, and a pattern of love and esteem.

If I had known this story at the time, it would have been a consolation to me in my search for Sir Philip, which was in vain. His agent, whose house was luckily among the uninfected, had heard nothing of him; and as it was unlikely he had been in London at all, if he had not been there, and a search over the metropolis appeared a thing equally useless and impossible, I retraced my melancholy steps, more perplexed than ever at his disappearance.

CHAPTER III.

As I had leave of absence from court for a certain time, I did not chuse to make my appearance before the King, till I had turned over in my mind all the possible modes of discovering my absent friend, or rather of accounting for his absence. I imagined him fallen ill, though not of the plague; but then why did he not let me know? It must have been some sudden and dreadful illness, that could have been sufficient to reduce him to such a silence. Had he been enticed away by some story of distress? This was not only possible, but considering his turn of mind, and his great tendency to confide as well as to do good, highly probable; but then who should have enticed him, and for what? And, above all, why should they keep him so long?

The more I reflected, the less reason could I see for coming to any conclusion. The plague

still appeared the likeliest cause of detention; but if it had seized him at all, it must have done so very suddenly, and at the moment of his going on shore. Should I not make enquiries thereabouts? I mean, at the Nore, and in that quarter? I did so. I took a boat down the river, enquired of the watermen at the stairs, and the sea-faring people on shore. I went, I believe, to every house in Sheerness; and then took the nearest road to London, making enquiries by the way. Nobody had heard anything. No gentleman had fallen sick. There were cases of infection among the natives, and strangers were supposed to have brought it; but the latter, like most of those who suffered everywhere, were poor. It was remarkable indeed how almost universally the gentry escaped; another argument which the physicians naturally adduced to shew the saving qualities, in such a calamity, of easiness of mind and a good blood.

Having thus again searched to no purpose, I quarrelled with fortune and fate, and everything else, that seemed to oppose the welfare of my excellent friend, not excepting the lady at Mickleham Park. It then struck me, that he might have fallen ill on her account, and in her neighbourhood; in which case, it was equally probable, that her visitors would know nothing of

it, and she would know everything. I wondered I had not thought of this before, and resolved instantly to go thither and introduce myself, and be very impudently particular. Shē will see, at any rate, thought I, what he perhaps is too delicate to tell her; that he still loves her; and if she is at all doubtful whether to do him justice or not, his new situation may determine her. Besides, if anything has happened to him, it is my duty to keep an eye on the welfare of this unobserved woman, whom he did the honour to think so highly of. He has bequeathed to me an interest in her.

But Miss Randolph! I should have to encounter the chance of seeing her, if Mr O'Rourke had not carried her off. It was most probable we should meet. And why not? Alas! it is easy to find fault with others; but should I not have been more ready to renew my acquaintance with the charming girl, certainly the tenderest and most feminine whom it had been my lot to meet with, had I not been in fault myself? Had I not been a sort of male Vavasour myself, only without the merits? Nay, as for that matter, I had loved the truth once as well as the Countess, and probably still loved it better. I had at least known how to appreciate the friend, whom she rejected. I was resolved then to face her, and blurt all out, except what

Sir Philip had enjoined me to keep secret, and if it should appear that Miss Randolph had still a regard for me, and had not yet been bespoken by this Mr O'Rourke, I would shew her haughty friend, what it was to be grateful and penitent. It would be necessary to put all my address in requisition; but that was a pleasure. My genius lay that way. In a word, I endeavoured to console myself for many painful and perplexing thoughts by dint of the coxcombry that was still in me; and a very consoling thing, I fear, it is. I really did not know how much actual tenderness and conscience I possessed,—unless it be a coxcombry in me, still, to say so.

I had supped one night with a party at Lady Castlemain's lodgings, where there was a great deal of riotous wit; and rose in the morning feverish and unrefreshed. There had luckily been a hard rain in the night. The dust was laid, the trees and hedges sparkled with rain drops; and as I rode along, I seemed to quench myself in the freshness of the morning.

Having been up in spite of my debauch at an early hour, (indeed the later I go to bed, the earlier I can rise, I suppose from restlessness,) I arrived betimes among the groves of Mickleham. The healthy quiet of the place, varied only by the songs of the birds, went to my heart. I

thought there was more real vivacity in it, than in all that I had witnessed overnight; and the looks of the peasant girls had a bud in them, compared with which Castlemain would have cut a poor figure that morning. Upon entering the park gate, the first object I saw, in the path leading to the house, was a lady with a book in her hand.

Her back was towards me: her step graceful and slow. Could it be Miss Randolph? No: the lady was taller by a head. It must be the Countess herself. Whoever it was, how superior did she seem to all the fair rakes of the court, thus walking abroad, like Aurora, and intent upon a book! But if it was the Countess, how could she be this sort of woman, and give up Sir Philip Herne? As I was to see Lady Vavasour, at all events, and perhaps was not to see Miss Randolph, which might be as well, I resolved to make no delay, as was my first intention, but follow her; and trust to my stars for an introduction. I did so, admiring at every step her fine figure and the unaffected elegance of her walk. If she had not been so tall, I could have thought it Miss Randolph, from a certain air in the carriage; and yet the air was completer somehow than it used to be. With all its unaffectedness, there was a greater look of high breeding in it; and the figure, with-

out taking leave of the proper slenderness of waist, and temperate elegance throughout, was more buxom,—plumper, and more womanly. You are a charming creature, thought I, whoever you are;—if you are the owner of the mansion, I hate you for being so lovely. The lady hearing my steps on the gravel just behind her, turned round. It was Miss Randolph!

She drew back a step or two, and with the most charming expression of countenance, in which there was delight as well as astonishment, exclaimed “Mr Esher!”—The next moment she turned pale, and murmured something indicative of a more reserved welcome.

My first impulse was to clasp the dear creature in my arms. This, however, I thought would be carrying my modesty too far. My next feeling was a vile suspicion, brought by my court habits, that she was enjoying her triumph over me. It struck me, that she was married, and that she was glad to see me, because it would let me know how little she cared for the sight. Her change of countenance recovered me; and concluding that I retained my power over her heart, I felt my address return, which had been rapidly giving way.

Truth saves a world of trouble. I had begun

life with a gallant love of sincerity; my friend had confirmed me in it; and I was resolved, as usual, to pour forth just what I thought.

“Pardon me,” said I, “dear Miss Randolph (if I may still call you so) for coming thus abruptly upon you. Anxiety for a friend has led me to the residence of Lady Vavasour, though I knew I should probably meet a dearer one, who may still perhaps hear without offence that she is more lovely than ever, and that I feel a deep regret, which will be better understood by her than I can express it; because, though I have been a giddy foolish fellow who did not know his own good, I feel my punishment most heartily; and because I cannot be so presumptuous as to think of troubling her with my presence in future, if on any account it should give her more pain than pleasure. I have come to speak to Lady Vavasour of Sir Philip Herne, and taken the same opportunity of knowing whether any hopes remained to myself. Pardon me for alluding to a happiness I once flattered myself with possessing. If another has shewn himself wiser,—if Miss Randolph is no longer Miss Randolph, I mean in name (for nothing I am sure could alter the sweetness of her nature), or if—which is most probable—I have long ceased to be anything to her but an idiot who became acquainted with an

angel, and behaved as if he had never seen her, it is but a word or look, or a waive of the hand, and you will never behold him more."

The dear girl wished to say something, but was unable. She put her hand over her eyes, in agitation; and as she drew back a pace or two at the same time, I thought my doom was to be pronounced. She removed her hand, and I saw that her eyes were in tears. She smiled as she did it, and fetching her breath with difficulty, but all in the most artless, charming manner conceivable, asked me if Sir Philip Herne was the friend I spoke of, and how he was.

I said I was proud to be able to answer in the affirmative to her first question, especially as Sir Philip had as great a regard for herself, as I perceived she had for my friend. As to the rest, I stated the melancholy uncertainty under which his silence had put me, and the reason why I had come to Mickleham to ask news of him, before I made my enquiries elsewhere.

"Oh, I am glad of this!" cried Miss Randolph, now weeping plentifully, in pretty contradiction to her words:—"All will go well surely, now that he is once again spoken of. He will be found, and we shall all be happy! I mean—will you not walk in?"

"You do not bid me go then, dear Ellen? For-

give me, if I venture too far, in calling you so; but when I see you the same charming, ingenuous girl as ever, I know not how to regulate my words, except by the truth. May I ask if you are still Miss Randolph?"

"Miss Randolph, Mr Esher! who should I be?"

"I understand there was a happy person, Mr O'Rourke, a friend of the Duke of Ormond's, who—"

A delightful colour came over her cheeks, at the top of which her eyes sparkled in a manner for which I had not formerly given them credit.

"Mr O'Rourke," said she, smiling, "is, I believe, as happy as health and good spirits can make him. He is now crossing the Irish sea."

I believe it was a little perversity that made me add—"And returns shortly to claim his bride? Is it not so?"

"I am aware of no such lady," said my charmer, and her countenance fell.

I could no longer profess to misunderstand her, for a moment; and yet I did not feel quite secure. There is something in the customs of the male part of the world, that renders them wonderfully exacting of the female. I believe I was ashamed to be outdone in love and merit, and felt a shabby desire to triumph; nay, even to revenge myself by a petulance. A better shame succeeded, and

I said, with real humility, "If the friendship of Sir Philip Herne, and the most penitent love and admiration—"

I had scarcely proceeded thus far, when her hand was laid in mine. One mutual pressure and one look from her eyes, were sufficient to explain all. The next minute, I found myself with transport walking arm in arm with her towards the house, and saying a hundred things in a breath. I should not have been able to say enough of my shame and regret at having for a moment ceased to think of her, if the very excuse would not have implied something unhandsome and foppish. My feelings were better expressed by a grateful admiration. By way of some apology, however, for admiring her again so heartily, after so long a negligence, I told her that she had realized all that she promised to be, and that I did not know a beauty at court that was to be compared with her. She answered me with some words, at once so modest, so frank, and so affectionate, that I dare not repeat their exquisite flattery. Hers had indeed been a first love; nor was I ever so vain as not to think it owing far more to the sweetness of her nature, than to anything in mine. I could only trust that I did not altogether disgrace her preference, and I resolved from that moment to study how I might deserve it. The

qualities with which she had gifted me during our first acquaintance, it was now my business to endeavour to realize. If I believed that I possessed the germs of them, the opinion was to be excused by the flattery of her love; and luckily for my encouragement, she was as sensible as she was handsome. We talked of old times, of the court, of the country, of Sir Philip Herne, of the sea fight; and the dear girl wept to think of the danger we had been in. She confessed that she thought I must have been in it, but that she did not dare to inquire. In fine, I told her of the new honour just conferred upon me;—and on recollecting this moment, I retract what I said at the end of the last chapter; for titles have one merit, if they have no other. They are good to bestow on the object one loves.

After turning into half a dozen walks, instead of pursuing the path to the house, and looking into all the favourite haunts of my mistress, we consulted respecting the position of Sir Philip and Lady Vavasour. I received a remarkable account of her Ladyship, indeed of everything. Lord Manchester had been mistaken throughout. In the first place, Mr O'Rourke had been no declared lover of Miss Randolph, nor any lover at all. He was old enough to be her father,—young

perhaps in the eyes of the venerable Earl, and with the usual lively manners of an Irish gentleman; but he was at Mickleham but for a short time, and spoke of nothing graver than a message he had brought from the Duke of Ormond. I seized this opportunity of letting Miss Randolph know the honour my friend had done me, in making me the depositary of the secret of her birth. I observed to her, how well he understood the nature of my feelings towards her; and how sure he had made himself, that I should seek to regain my happiness. I said I need not add, that the deposit was a sacred one with me, and that nothing would have induced him to make it, but a certainty that I should do all the good in my power to those who were dear to him.

“Dear Sir Philip!” cried Ellen, with her eyes full of tears—“I could walk over the world to find him—if you would go with me.”

“And you could have gone without me, sweet Ellen, like a fair page in a tragedy, if you had not set your kind wits to make so much of me, before you knew him.”

“’Tis generously said,” replied she, “only I could have said it better. But find him we will and must, somehow; and Lady Vavasour must love him, even in pity to herself. Oh! that

wretched Dalton ! what a world of mischief he has made ! But had Sir Philip re-appeared, all must have gone well."

She now proceeded with her explanations. She could only account for Lord Manchester's supposition of the courtship of Mr O'Rourke, by attributing it to the talk of his valets and the servants. Mr O'Rourke, being a confidential servant of the Duke of Ormond's, treated her with much respect, and was sometimes alone with her; and as nobody but the Countess and Miss Vavasour knew of his being a messenger, it was perhaps naturally enough concluded, that his intentions were more particular. "But as for the quiet," said Miss Randolph, "which his Lordship spoke of, and in which he seems to have represented us as having lived ever since Sir Philip went away, his report is truly marvellous, for he came upon us at the close of an extraordinary event, and heard all about it. I can only conclude, that Mr Dalton among his other secrets, has one for compelling people to be silent; for, now I recollect, he met his Lordship on his road to us, and conversed with him."

"What was this event?" I asked. "You raise my curiosity in the highest degree."

"You know Dalton, and the footing on which he was with us," resumed Miss Randolph; "Sir

Philip has told you all he knew about it. But Sir Philip did not know, nor indeed did anybody, till the secret broke among us like an earthquake, that Dalton was the most artful and perfidious of men. His very candour was artifice. He deceived the liberal and open nature of Sir Philip by pretending to no more virtue than he described the generality of mankind as possessing; but he took care to conceal that he was worse than the basest. He deceived him the more, because he sometimes ventured upon making him uneasy by encouraging dear Lady Vavasour in the false opinions that had grown upon her; thus preparing the way for his own designs, while he undermined the interest of Sir Philip, and all the while inducing the latter to take his impudence for sincerity! Oh that odious man! I am sometimes at a loss which to think his worst quality, his impudence or his deceit; but I really think the former has the advantage. I have read of men as deceiving, but a creature so unblushingly shameless I should never have supposed to exist, had I not seen it."

"Dear Ellen!" cried I, interrupting her, "I did not think you could speak so vehemently; nor till I saw your face again (pardon me), was I quite certain that you could speak so well. Why, how quiet you used to be; three or four words only at a time, and those of the gentlest!"

“But they were sincere,” said Ellen, “were they not?”

“That indeed they were; you have proved it, to my shame and my delight.”

“I should have talked at that time as I do now, if I had been able. I cannot love the good and the sincere as I do, and not speak somewhat sharply of this very hateful disturber. Besides, he presumed upon the gentleness you alluded to, thinking, I suppose, that because I—because it seems—I—”

The subject of my charmer's illness was here involuntarily brought up, a recollection at once the most flattering and the most painful to myself. I now loved too well, to think of it with a vain satisfaction. Every sentence she uttered discovered an union of sweetness and firmness, such as I had not been accustomed to look for in woman; and though she confessed to me that she would have loved another if she could, and that she might have done so before long, had she met (as she was pleased to say) with anybody that resembled me, the ingenuousness and good sense of the confession made me love her the more. Must I own, in order to be as candid myself, that when the return of her health was first mentioned, and when I saw her, during its mention, looking so full of it, and so blooming, I felt a movement of dissatisfaction at witnessing this instance of the power of youth

and a good constitution over the withering effects of my infidelity?—Oh courts! Oh *venez-à-moi!* Oh solitary education, what harm had you not done me!—I cast out of me with disdain this most selfish evidence of the most selfish part of me, and would have laughed to think what a fool I was at that instant, if feelings of the deepest gratitude and love had not quickly come in their stead. We again said a hundred things to one another, too delightful to be recorded; and now resting ourselves on one of the park benches, my dear one resumed her narrative.

Though Lady Vavasour's disbelief in truth and sincerity, which, in gradually affecting her own mode of conduct, had become the great stumbling block between her and Sir Philip, had been thus increased by the management of Dalton, the latter drew a very false, and as it should seem a very absurd conclusion, for so shrewd a person,—that the error was all to turn to his own account. Sir Philip was to be loved less and less, because sincerity was a romance, and he to become more and more agreeable, because he was manifestly not to be depended upon. “But I have learnt a great deal by the help of this man,” said Miss Randolph, “and so far have reason to thank him. I have learnt, that none are, to all real intents and purposes so vain and foolish, as those who think the whole world made up of folly

and vanity." And she was right. There is one wide part of human nature, of which they assuredly know nothing. Dalton was not aware, that those who have been used to what he called romance, never heartily give it up, or take kindly to such as think they have undermined it. He might sow discord between the Countess and her lover; but in order to take his place, he must have brought the other's virtues in aid of his own worldliness, which was impossible. So he made love in vain; for it seems he did make love, and during the whole period of his acquaintance too, though for the most part in an under way, and by the most insidious approaches. "When he had succeeded in producing the rupture with Sir Philip, he ventured," pursued Miss Randolph, "upon a plain avowal. He met with a refusal couched in no very gratifying terms; for Lady Vavasour, though she had never been really in love, had entertained a greater regard for Sir Philip than she fancied, and she was too irritated at her own treatment of him to be pleased with a new lover like Dalton. The rejection mortified Dalton, though it did not make him desist; and when Sir Philip was induced to send by him that unhappy message—"

"What message?" cried I.

"He said," answered Miss Randolph, "that

Sir Philip, with every wish for her happiness, took leave of her for ever."

"There was no such message. The scoundrel! It was an invention of his own."

"I thought so," resumed Ellen;—"I said so: I repeatedly said so: for Lady Vavasour had long encouraged me to use the freedom of a sister."

"And what made you so sure?"

"I knew it," said the dear girl with a blush as beautiful as her heart, "because he loved too well."

"Do you know, dearest creature, that you talk very ill in saying so? Are you aware of the consequences?"

"How?"

"Why I shall kiss you in open daylight, in spite of all the decorums, before the trees here, and the birds, and the deer. There is a fawn already at gaze in expectation of it."

Miss Randolph said nothing, but as I have spared my self-love many exquisite gratifications during this narrative, I shall not scruple to affirm, that she pressed my hand as she looked at me, and that her look seemed to say, "I will kiss you with all my heart, by and bye." It was like, and yet it was very unlike, one of Miss Price's looks.—But to proceed.

This was not the whole message, according to

Mr Dalton. There was a longer portion which he was coy in relating. Nothing, he said, but her Ladyship's repeated request could have induced him to deliver it. It was this:—that, having confided, on ~~his~~ receipt of the former part of the message, the secret of his own affections to Sir Philip, the latter sincerely thought, from the agreement of their opinions, that the Countess would have been happier with the said Dalton, than she would have been with himself.

Dalton here overshot his mark. He could be cunning beyond measure in playing upon the weaknesses of others, where himself was out of the question, but when his own vanity interfered, he made horrible impudent mistakes. Miss Randolph, the moment she heard this latter portion of the message, pronounced it, "more impossible," than the other. Lady Vavasour, believing the one, was inclined, out of anger, to put faith in the other; but it only made her angry with two persons instead of one. Dalton hoped, that it would pique her to like him better. He fancied she would marry him out of resentment; but between anger at finding him persevere, and doubt of his veracity, she put a stop to his pretensions with an air of astonishment, that was more provoking than scorn. He then attempted to run away with her.

Yes: this fine quiet course of life, so confi-

dently described by Lord Manchester, had been diversified with an attempt at carrying off the lady of the mansion, frightening Miss Vavasour into fits, and meditating a piece of treachery against Miss Randolph, which it made my blood boil to think of! The Duke of Buckingham had been there, and would fain have done her the honour of taking her into Yorkshire! And most of these placid circumstances, if not all of them, my Lord of Manchester was acquainted with! But we shall see, that Dalton was possessed of the most extraordinary preservatives; and the Duke condescended to partake of them.

The attempt on the Countess was the most impudent thing in the world. There are extremes of impudence which baffle suspicion; and the Countess, in the first instance, was beguiled by one of these gallantries of nonchalance. Dalton bribed the coachman of a lady of quality in the neighbourhood (I forget her name) to lend him her carriage for an evening. It was a lady known at Mickleham Park; and one whom he visited on the strength of his reception there. With this coach he has the face to come at dusk, with an agitated story of the lady's being taken dangerously ill in her lord's absence, and of her anxiety to see the Countess, in order to deposit a secret with her of the utmost importance. The lady's woman

would have come with him, he said, but she could not leave her mistress, so he had bade the coachman and footman get ready the carriage, and they had come in a desperation of haste, presuming upon Lady Vavasour's goodness, and knowing she would not stand upon ceremony in an emergency so distressing. Miss Vavasour or Miss Randolph, he said, would doubtless have the goodness to accompany her; and she would pardon him, if, under the circumstances, he went with them.

Lady Vavasour did not hesitate a moment. To be sure, Miss Vavasour and Miss Randolph were, unluckily, both out of the way (Dalton knew it well); but on such an occasion, common-places were to give way. Her own maid-servant would be enough. Dalton summoned the girl himself, gave her the orders in a breathless haste, led the Countess towards the carriage, her Ladyship throwing over herself a mantle as she went, and in an instant he was beside her in the coach, driving towards Leatherhead. The dying lady's house was on the road to Kingston. But the maid! Where is she? Dalton uttered an oath at the "dilatory fool," begging her Ladyship's pardon, and concluding with a laugh that he supposed she had halted to set her cap "What signifies a poor lady's death," said he, "com-

pared with the footman's opinion of Mistress Bridget!"

He then complimented the Countess on her being able to dispense with a female attendant. Other women, he said, on the least movement of their spirits, must have some one to weep to, to rail at, to order hither and thither; but she was the united strength and collected sweetness of her sex. Having made this pretty speech, he begged pardon for seeming to mix up his own feelings with an admiration which would have been excited in anybody; and so, turning the discourse to the dying lady, contrived to get rid of the subject of the maid-servant, and appeared to have determined equally to waive any recurrence to his own.

Notwithstanding, however, what he had said of the firmness of Lady Vavasour, the suddenness of the occasion had discomposed her a little; and it furnished him a pretext for offering her a glass of wine. He had hastily stuffed a bottle and glass, he said, which her own butler had given him, into one of the coach-pockets, foreseeing that she might not be the worse for it. He was afraid the bottle had been shaken, and that she would taste the crust: "Nay," said he, (taking it out) "you will taste something worse, I fear; for the rogue has given us one of his own bottles by mistake; the best part of its contents have gone into the butler's

decanter." Lady Vavasour good-humouredly said, that she could do very well without it ; but he expressed so much regret, and contrived so ingeniously to render acquiescence a matter of delicacy towards himself, that, being grateful for his own delicacy towards her, and thinking he was doing a good-natured action, she took the glass to oblige him. It was so bitter, that not to hurt his feelings, she would not say what difficulty she had in swallowing it.

By this time they were beyond Leatherhead, and had turned into the Kingston road. Dalton complained of the " lumbering old family coach," and asked her Ladyship if she had any objection to shorten the time, by getting into a posting-carriage. At the same instant, begging her pardon, he put his head out of the window, and exchanging a word or two with the coachman, told her, that by the greatest good luck, such a conveyance was at hand ; and that the man said, a traveller had just got out. The Countess could see no objection. On the contrary, she was desirous of being as quick as possible, only hoping that the coachman or footman could go with them, as having the most certain knowledge of the house. Dalton said they should both go. The coach could easily be left till the next morning.

The man accordingly drew up to the road side.

The coach-door was opened, the steps let down, Dalton got out, and was preparing to hand forth the Countess, when she was surprised at hearing a strange voice observe, "This is the very coach, Thomas, depend upon it." At the same time a gentleman on horseback advanced, as if to interrogate the driver; between whom and the said Thomas his servant, the following dialogue was going on.

"And who are you, pray, that I may not ask you a civil question?"

"Who am I? Why isn't my name Wilson?"

"No, it isn't. 'Tis Ryan."

"The devil! You seem to know a great deal more about me than I do myself. And where, pray, did you learn that my name is Ryan?"

"At the Castle-gate, county Dublin, where you narrowly escaped hanging, you firebrand."

"Oh, I narrowly escaped hanging, did I: and how did you find that out?"

"By the brogue in your false mouth. Come, now, Dermot, what are ye at? And what's become of that devil incarnate, the Major?"

Lady Vavasour had instinctively halted at hearing this curious conversation.

"Mr Dalton," said she, "this is not my lady's coachman."

"'Tis a new one," said Dalton, laughing, "and

a great knave, if this fellow says right. The sooner we get out of his hands the better; but we must tell her Ladyship's household what sort of vagabond they have got among them. Come, madam, be pleased to make haste."

Dalton, notwithstanding his laughter, could not conceal that he was angry. The Countess naturally confiding, forgot, however, in the supposed urgency of the occasion, the suspicion in which himself had encouraged her; and she was again preparing to descend, when the stranger cried out, "Stop, madam!"

"What now?" said Dalton, in a tone as if a new person had come up, unconnected with the other. His readiness of invention was still lively. "'Tis the poor madman," continued he, in a whisper,—“the mad gentleman of Dorking. Take no notice, dear Lady Vavasour, but get into the chaise as fast as you can. 'Tis frightful to think what these people will say to women."

The suspicions of the Countess were now fairly roused. Dalton's cunning had failed, where it always did—in not giving credit to others for elevation of sentiment; or rather, in not understanding it. "No," said she, "Mr Dalton, if the stranger is mad, I shall think it my duty to stop and see what can be done for him, let him say what he will." (How Sir Philip would have loved

her for that speech ! How he *did* love her for being capable of it !) “ I will hear,” continued she, “ what the gentleman has to say.”

“ Allow me to ask,” said the gentleman, “ whether I have the honour of speaking to Lady Vavasour ?”

“ Lady Vavasour is before you,” answered the Countess.

“ Judge, madam, of the pleasure I feel,” returned the stranger, “ when I tell you that it is to your Ladyship’s house my journey is directed, and that I have the honour of being the bearer of a message from the Duke of Ormond. Meanwhile, madam, you are deceived. There is treachery with somebody ; and I am much mistaken, if—”

At this part of the stranger’s address, Dalton, who had been unable to suppress his agitation, and had uttered a murmur of desperation, suddenly seized his arm, and drew him aside. Their conversation was loud and vehement.

“ Do not stir, madam, from the coach,” cried Mr O’Rourke (for it was he). “ Do not stir. Thomas, shut up the door ; and if the fellow offers to drive, shoot him.”

At this moment Dalton uttered a horrible oath, and a pistol went off. It was followed by another. Lady Vavasour said, she could not account for a wonderful calmness, and even pleasure, which she

felt during this extraordinary adventure. Everything passed before her, as if she had been a spectator at a theatre. She was perfect mistress of her senses—was aware there was treachery, perhaps danger; and the behaviour of Dalton suddenly enlightened her as to the whole nature of the man she had been trusting. Yet her feeling of security and pleasure was invincible. She sat back in the coach, certain of a good ending to the drama, and disposed to comment upon it, when it was over, with an admiration of its novelty. “It struck me,” said Miss Randolph, at this part of her narrative (for the present summary of the adventure is made up of her account and Mr O’Rourke’s), “that the pleasure she spoke of, might have been owing to a sudden sense of the worth and tenderness of Sir Philip Herne, as contrasted with the conduct of the man who had helped to undermine him; but I was mistaken, as you will see presently.”

Her Ladyship, in spite of her calmness, was startled by the re-appearance of Dalton at the coach door. He was on horseback, and addressed her with undisguised vehemence.

“Lady Vavasour,” said he, “listen to the last words you will hear from me; that is to say, if you are as wise as you are confident. If not, you will

hear worse. I have exchanged shots with this meddling fool, and taught him to remember his interference. My intentions were honourable. They have been crossed, like every effort of my life, by James Butler and his myrmidons. Now, mark—if a syllable is breathed about me, I am in possession of secrets—and this O'Rourke knows I am—which I will blazon on a hill-top, and in every house, till he, and his King, and friends of yours who little expect it, shall be unable to shew their faces for shame and *peril*."

With these words, he put spurs to his horse, and we have not heard of him since.

"Pray," said I, "is this man, who speaks of the Duke of Ormond as James Butler, a man of what Herne calls a *weltering* countenance, lax and flushed? And has he a very high forehead, with sharp, grey eyes?"

"His countenance," answered Miss Randolph, "is what you describe it, but was thought handsome by many. His forehead is so high, that I used to think it a deformity. It was like one forehead piled on another."

"Like Sir Philip Herne's," said I, smiling.

"Like Sir Philip Herne's!" echoed Miss Randolph, in amazement. "True, Sir Philip's, now I think of it, is, I believe, as high; but then

how handsome his eyes and hair made it! Sir Philip's seemed all candour, and Dalton's all impudence."

"I begin to be almost certain," returned I, "that I have seen this man before. And his way of uttering his words—was it not over-smooth and particular?"

"No: on the contrary, it was gay and uncere-
monious."

"What! was he always so? He did not always then call the Duke of Ormond after this puritani-
cal fashion of 'James Butler?'"

"No: and Lady Vavasour was struck with the remarkable manner in which he uttered the name, when he took his leave. She said, he seemed to be cutting out the words, rather than speaking them. I have heard him talk in that way, once or twice, when he had drank more wine than usual; and at those times, I think, instead of becoming louder and gayer, he would get low-voiced and serious, and utter things he was not accustomed to."

"He is certainly the man I have seen. The more I think of it—of times and circumstances—the more I am persuaded that I have known him in connection with the Duke of Buckingham."

"Indeed! then you will be persuaded more and more, when you hear what I was about to tell you."

Mr O'Rourke's wound was not so great as Dalton fancied. Indeed it was slight enough, and just furnished an excuse to pretend it was worse ; for Dalton had whispered something in his ear that precluded all intention of a hue and cry, and O'Rourke gave himself up to his servant, as if faint with loss of blood, purely to allow the other time to make off. He contented himself with telling him, in return for his whisper, that his threats would go for nothing, if he offered to stay another hour in the neighbourhood, or if he committed the least further violence on Lady Vavasour ; and while resting on his servant's shoulder, he kept an eye on the coach, knowing what Dalton was going to say, but watching in case he exceeded his tacit permission to that effect. As to the chaise, the pretended coachman and footman must have settled that, for they quitted their former post, and went off with it the instant their master fired his pistol. Mr O'Rourke said, that when Dalton drew out his pistol, he presented him another, but, whether intentionally or in his hurry, fired his own before his antagonist could draw the trigger ; and owing to the dark, and to the violent movement of Dalton, the shot, when returned, was little better than a random one.

Mr O'Rourke's wound was in his arm. Lady Vavasour, treating him like a proper knight errant, took off her scarf, and bound it over the

place. She would have had him come into the coach, which his servant undertook to drive, but he said it was better he should remain outside in case of further alarm; and so, joining Thomas's horse to the others, and the coach being turned about, her new conductors proceeded to restore her Ladyship to the home she was to have been taken away from.

The Countess said, that Dalton had scarcely done speaking, when she felt herself becoming as unaccountably sleepy, as she had been happy. While tying up O'Rourke's arm, she could hardly keep her eyes open; and when they arrived at Mickleham, she was in such a stupor of sleep, that they were obliged to carry her into the house as if she had been dead. Some of the foolish servants ran up stairs to Miss Vavasour, and, in spite of Mr O'Rourke's assurances to the contrary, told her that she was brought home a corpse; which so frightened the poor lady, that she fell into convulsions. Miss Randolph was dreadfully alarmed, but retained better possession of her senses; yet she knew not what to make of this extraordinary lethargy, till Miss Vavasour, on recovering, discerned what it was. Dalton, in the glass of wine, had given her opium. This discovery explained at once the whole villainy of his intentions, and the extent of Lady Vavasour's escape. His ob-

ject was to subject her so completely to his power, that she would have been glad to marry him. At least, this was his expectation. He would have found himself deceived in it; but the consequences would still have been too dreadful to think of. Miss Randolph could not well speak of this part of the enormity. Indeed, she appeared not very well to comprehend it; but O'Rourke, with whom I became afterwards acquainted, said, that when Miss Vavasour made the discovery of the opium, a drug with which she herself turned out to be acquainted in her own person (so many helps for sorrow are resorted to, which nobody suspects!); and when he told her what Dalton had said in his ear, and she saw before her the villainy that had been designed, and the villainy that was still threatened, she never beheld such a picture of feminine despair;—something so extremely agonized, and yet so invincibly gentle. Miss Vavasour had been very handsome, and was still remarkable for the touching sweetness of her manners.

The Countess remained in this stupor nearly the whole night. Next morning, from her exaltation of spirits, she fell into an extreme state of dejection. "Not a word more than I have told you respecting Dalton," said Miss Randolph, "was uttered from that moment by anybody, nor was his name mentioned. It seems clear to me,

that he knew whose daughter I was ; but that could not be his only secret. The King was mentioned as a party concerned ; and I suspect, even dear Miss Vavasour is not without her terrors of this hateful man."

" And after all, how did O'Rourke become acquainted with the design of carrying off Lady Vavasour ?"

" By the merest, yet most natural chance in the world. He happened to stop at an inn on the Kingston road, where a horseman was telling the people of a bustle he had seen at Lady Vavasour's gate. The horseman said he had asked one of the servants what was the matter, and had been told that Lady So-and-so had sent for the Countess in a great hurry, having been seized with a mortal illness. Another man pronounced this to be impossible ; ' for,' said he, ' I have just come from her Ladyship's with a parcel for the Leatherhead carrier, and she was never better in her life. Besides, the coachman is at home, and it is not sickness that keeps him either, for he has been treating all the servants to drink, and me with 'em.' Now here was suspicion enough for anybody ; and Mr O'Rourke was the more alive to it, because, from a description of Dalton which I wrote to my father, the Duke said he knew something of the man ; and part of O'Rourke's very business

at Mickleham Park, was to observe him narrowly, and act as he thought fit in consequence. It was supposed at Mickleham, that O'Rourke no sooner heard the voice of the pretended coachman, who in that manner betrayed himself to his servant, than he knew who the master was; and this turned out to be the fact, as we shall see. Indeed, Dalton had shewn he knew O'Rourke, by mentioning his name when he took leave at the coach door."

It was thought that Lady Vavosour's dejection would leave her, when the effects of the opium went off; but though it altered its character, and was borne with a sweetness of temper superior even to what she exhibited before, it had never ceased from that moment.

"Depend upon it," said I, "she loves Sir Philip."

"No," said Miss Randolph. "Dalton's attempt had scarcely taken place, when Lord Manchester came down with accounts of the great fight at sea, and the gallant behaviour of the volunteers. When Sir Philip's name was mentioned, the Countess changed colour, but said nothing; nor has his name escaped her lips ever since they parted, with the exception of one instance."

"And when was that?"

"The day after she refused Dalton. It was Sir Philip's birth-day. She was sad and silent after

dinner; and I could not help thinking that she was pondering on the difference between the two men. She was also still more sisterly towards me than usual,—sitting for an hour together with my hand in hers; and I thought I saw the tears in her eyes. The impulse to speak was irresistible. ‘Dear Margaret,’ I said, ‘will you be angry with me if I am very sincere?’—‘Why should you think I could?’ she observed, colouring.—‘Because, though sincerity is always right, it may not be always right to utter it.’—‘Say on, sweet one,’ said the Countess, affectionately, and at the same time pinched my cheek, and kissed me: ‘I think,’ resumed I, with hesitation—‘I think—but perhaps it is because I hope—in short, may I say anything? May I mention any name I please?’—‘I know what name you are going to mention,’ answered the Countess. I know not how she looked, as she said this, for I did not dare to look in her face. ‘’Tis his birth-day,’ said I, turning down my eyes, and kissing the hand that held mine.—‘Well,’ said she, in a kind, but steady voice.—‘You know’ continued I, ‘how fond he was of drinking healths of absent friends on their birth-days. If you would not think me unkind—or—presumptuous, I would drink his;’ and so saying, what must I do, but fall a weeping. I longed to do one friend a service, but was afraid of hurting another.

The Countess folded me in her arms, and I felt a tear on my neck. ‘Presumptuous!’ said she, in a fond and faltering voice: ‘How can my dear Ellen couple two such words as herself and presumptuous; and to me too, above all women, who am her sister, and her friend, grateful for enjoying her love!’ And she said more of this nature, which made me hope everything for Sir Philip. How was I disappointed, when she added:—‘But women do not always bestow their love on the most deserving; and so it is more honour to Ellen than to me, that she loves me as heartily as she does. Nay, must it not be so? Well, well, then there must be a mystery in it somehow, for love her I must, and ought; and love me she will, whether I deserve it or no: but as to him she speaks of, there is a difference. It is necessary, for a thousand reasons, that both parties should be worthy: and observe me, Ellen; let what I say sink deeply into your mind; not in order to dispute it with me, which would humble me more than I can express, and effect nothing of what you desire; for in saying it, I wish to be understood as entreating,—nay, as expecting, (forgive me for saying so) that his name shall not be again mentioned between us. Yes; forgive me for using the word expect; think ill of me, if you please, for saying it, and yet do not do so. Lay it to the account of feel-

ings which your loving and unspoiled heart is acquainted with; but hark one word, and then silence between us till to-morrow:—*I am not worthy of him.*’”

On hearing Miss Randolph repeat these words, I could not help rising from my seat with an exclamation. “She loves him!” cried I, “she loves him! and your loving and unspoiled heart does not see it.”

“The moment I heard these words,” said Miss Randolph, “I thought so too, in spite of what she had been saying; and as I uttered something between an exclamation and a moan (for she still held me to her bosom all the while, and her head was over mine), she seemed to think it necessary to prevent any answer into which my surprise might betray me; for she added, with a dreadful damp to all my hopes—‘It is not for his sake I say it, but my own.’ She then raised my head, and kissing my weeping eyes over and over again, went up stairs to her own room.”

“She loves him!” I repeated; “’tis as clear as noon-day. And how has she behaved since?”

“In a way that would make me think as you do, if she took any steps to make Sir Philip aware of it. You know the dislike he had to little tricks and manœuvres; such as sending children out of the room upon false pretences; making untrue

apologies for not seeing people, or visiting; expressing opinions really not one's own, for the sake of an argument or a jest; and otherwise hurting what he used to call the crystal beauty of her nature, and the cause of truth. Well; from the moment of Dalton's attempt, she did nothing of all this—not an atom. I believe she had continued the practice in one or two respects, rather out of a dread of giving up the argument, than any wish to continue it: but from the date of her dejection, she has been as scrupulous as one of these new people they call Quakers. She is also less decided in her general tone. 'It seems to me,' and 'it appears,' and 'perhaps,' are now among her commonest phrases. She wished, the other day, to say something to me privately respecting her aunt, and it happened that the very child was present who first occasioned Sir Philip to find fault with her. 'Mary, my love,' said the Countess, 'come here and give me a kiss: I wish to say something to Miss Randolph, which must only be heard by those who are concerned in it; so take this kiss and this peach, and run into the garden with them!' I fancied I saw Sir Philip's eyes looking at her, and longed to tell her so; but she always contrives, in such an ingenious manner, by the mere tone of her conduct, to keep me to my tacit agreement, that I had not the courage. She then told me, that her aunt's

feelings, always too delicate for her health, had been so wrought upon by the late adventure, that, strange as it might appear, my very attentiveness towards her, was more than at present she could bear; and therefore,' said the Countess, smiling through her tears, 'you must be kind enough to be a little inhuman, and not seem to care for her quite so much.'"

"Miss Vavasour was always fond of you," said I, inquiringly.

"She has been to me like the kindest of mothers," answered Miss Randolph, "and I am sure—"

My charmer here broke off in a tender confusion, struck with the thought that she had never known who her mother was. She was perplexed between the filial love she felt for Miss Vavasour, and the reflection that it might have been placed elsewhere but for a cruel mystery. I took the opportunity of kissing her hand with a respectfulness which I felt at the bottom of my heart. She thanked me for it with eyes swimming with love and tears; and after a little pause we resumed.

"My dearest Ellen," said I, "again and again I repeat, that the Countess loves Sir Philip, as surely as he loves her: and I'll now tell you the reason why you do not see it. The truth is,

you are too good. Nay, do not interrupt me, or I will punish you with saying twenty times as much. What I mean is, that of us two, you have hitherto been the superior, (for you must know that in future I am resolved not to be out-done in merit); but such having been the case, you cannot know what it is to be loved, and at the same time to feel oneself not so worthy as the lover. The more admirable the loving person, the more humiliated we feel at the instinct, which tells us that we are loved without deserving it. Excess of esteem may even sometimes have an effect in preventing love, by exaggerating this barrier of inequality; unless where it is accompanied by such a total forgetfulness of self, that we love purely because of the admirable qualities of the object, without any reference to our own deserts; but this is perhaps impossible where we are loved also, especially if we have pride, and especially above all, if, besides pride, we possess real merit, and are in circumstances which give us importance in the eyes of the world. Now all this is the case with Lady Vavasour. She was first a bit of a spoiled child,—very charming, no doubt, and as candid as Sir Philip would have her; though partly so perhaps, because she did not think it worth her while to be otherwise.”

“ Ah, you have never seen her,” observed Miss Randolph:—“ once look on her face, and you will think nothing but what is good of her.”

“ I don’t know that,” said I; “ I have seen one face, which has absorbed my good opinion of all others. However, I can believe something of the kind, after what you and Sir Philip have said of it.—Well: our heiress then fell into the hands of Lord Vavasour, who persuaded her that he knew the world, but could not persuade her that the knowledge required any particular sharpness of sight: so she joined his false knowledge to her real natural intelligence, which made an unlucky compound. When she became acquainted with Sir Philip Herne, she met with a mind, the candour of which resembled her own as it used to be, and was the exalted counterpart of it in point of understanding. Her acquired defects, as well as her virtues, assisted in preventing her from loving him; but she could not help admiring him. At length her husband died, and she consented to construe her regard into love; but it was not love. The candour of Sir Philip, in differing with her opinions, and shewing the ill effect they had upon the transparency of her character, piqued her to differ with him in turn. The greater her sense of his understanding, the sharper the pique. She warmed the dispute into an

offence, rather than give up the point;—all, observe, because she did not love ; and now she is ashamed of it, and full of regret, and resolved to become secretly what he would approve of, because she does love. Yes, my sweet friend, I see it all as plainly as the hill before us ; and so do you, by your looks.”

Miss Randolph, with a new joy in her face, acknowledged that I had convinced her. She was for flying directly to her friend, and telling her that “ a friend of *all* ” was anxious to speak with her. “ But,” said I, “ you forget that Sir Philip is missing, and that a new anxiety is in store for her. I came, I confess, with very little hope of obtaining news of him at Mickleham Park, but I thought it my duty to inquire. What other feelings I had, I need not say. My intentions with respect to Lady Vavasour were to ask her if she knew anything of my friend, on the supposition that he might have made a communication to her, though to nobody else ; but I resolved on making the inquiry, chiefly that I might see whether she yet loved him or not, and so getting the chance of better news for himself, as soon as he should be found.”

Miss Randolph could not conceive it possible that he should not be found, and that speedily. I did not tell her what strange stories were to be

heard at court, respecting the sudden disappearances of people; what had been said, in particular, on that point, respecting a ruffian whom they called Captain Bill. But this reflection reminded me of asking what she had to tell us of the Duke. I then learnt that his Grace had made his appearance at the Park within a week after the flight of Dalton; that with great address he got Lord Manchester to introduce him to Lady Vavasour, as a man anxious to vindicate himself in the eyes of goodness and beauty from the aspersions with which he understood Mr Dalton had been pleased to bespatter him; that he said it was true he had had, long since, the dishonour of knowing Mr Dalton, or rather of admitting him to his society, for he believed him to be a mere adventurer; but that he had heartily repented of this folly, as well as of a great many others, especially as a calumny of Dalton's had induced him on one occasion to offend her Ladyship's charming friend Miss Randolph, which was a relapse into juvenile absurdities, of which he was now too old, and he trusted, too wise, to be guilty again; and finally, that, he had the honour of bearing his Majesty's expressions of regard and respect for the character of Lady Vavasour, and a hope that she would not long continue to deny his Majesty's court, the nobility as well as beauty of her presence.

His Grace followed up his introduction with two or three more visits, in which Miss Randolph said he made himself so agreeable, or rather so delightful, with the variety of his compliments and the unceasing gaiety of his wit, that Lady Vavasour's dejection appeared to be suspended whenever he was present; and she began to suspect, indeed, that she was hardly worthy of Sir Philip. As to herself, she could not help being amused to the highest degree by such an overflow of spirits and of fancy; and she *hoped* he had become as good as he was pleasant; but she could never get out of her head the scene at the garden door which Sir Philip had described to her; "and after all," said she, "there was something about him which did not deceive me."

"What was that?"

"I saw he did not really value the truth. He made a mighty shew of it,—too mighty; but whenever he touched upon points on which he thought we liked to have truth set aside, or falsehood glossed over, he betrayed himself. He little thought what was going on among us, and what worship we paid to a divinity not in his creed."

"Then how came you to think, that Lady Vavasour was admiring him more than she did?"

"'Twas only because I was not quite so aware of her feelings as I was afterwards. I asked her

one day if she did not think the Duke of Buckingham very pleasant. 'Yes,' she said, in her natural tone, but with a sigh; 'Don't you?' 'I do,' answered I,—'but—'—'But what?'—'I do not quite believe everything he says?'—'Quite believe, my dear!' said the Countess; 'I don't believe one half of it, nor a third.' And so saying she blushed, though I could not see for what."

"She blushed," said I, "because she thought she was exhibiting something of her former excess of doubt, and for fear you should not see that it was warranted by the occasion. And there was love too in the blush,—love for Sir Philip, and shame to think that the Duke had been sitting where he ought to be."

"How blind was I not to see it!" cried Miss Randolph. "Well: let us hasten to get rid of this foolish witty Duke, and think of Sir Philip. His Grace, seeing us amused, thought proper to let us more and more into the secrets of the court. By degrees, from ridiculing, he fell to pitying the life there: and then, out of charity defended it. In short, he threw such a gloss over it, that according to him, as human nature must have its imperfections somehow, under all circumstances, it was the lot of all elegance and good breeding to come inevitably to the same way of life; and therefore, as he did us the honour of thinking us

elegant and well-bred in spite of our rustic solitude, he—what shall I say?”—And the lovely speaker here fell into some confusion.

“How!” said I, “he did not dare to insult the hospitality of women?”

“No, no,” said Miss Randolph; “he did nothing which I suppose a courtier does not think himself warranted in doing. I have heard him call it ‘making love.’ I am sure it is a very bad imitation of—I mean,—that is to say, it is surely as different from love, as falsehood from truth.”

“And did he make his love, as he calls it, to both?”

“He did; and drew a promise of secrecy from both, under a pretence of remorse, and of a wish not to be thought more ill of than could be helped. Unluckily, he extracted the same promise from my lady’s woman, who was too well-bred to keep it; and so all came out. The Countess laughed at first, and then shed tears. ‘My dear,’ said she, ‘it is not for this buffoon with a star at his breast, that I shed tears. It is for my own pride. Not that I believed him for a moment, or thought he knew anything either about love or remorse;—I did it to get rid of him at the time; but I am humiliated in having my attention thus forced upon people, when I am ill. I would be left alone.

How must we get rid of him? I cannot laugh at him; I cannot be indignant with him. This task of being mistress of a house is one I should long ago have been more tired of than I am, if there had been any such manly offices to perform; and my aunt's illness has shewn me, that I am less fitted to sustain it than ever; she too has sustained it more by dint of being twice as unable as myself than anything else. She can now hardly whisper to a servant.'

"I asked, not without dread," continued Miss Randolph, "if I should say anything to the Duke; for I felt as if I could say or do anything, however frightened, rather than see her plagued with such a guest. The Countess looked at me with a smile, and said, 'You! Nay, I believe you could do anything for your friend; but the task is fitted for none of us. *Such* a set of *masters* of a house! Good heavens!'"

"We never thought," pursued Ellen, "of applying to Lord Manchester, so much had we been accustomed to consider him as gentle and inoffensive as ourselves. It was finally agreed, however, that as we never saw one without the other, and as his Lordship had announced his intention of leaving us next day, the Duke should never again be invited to quit his Epsom lodgings when he came down with that intention. He

used to stay awhile at a house next door to the inn there. Lord Manchester would leave him there and come on, and then the ceremony was to dispatch a servant with a message of invitation. We thought in the first instance, that we must resent the Duke's behaviour, perhaps" (and here she smiled) "because he included Mrs Bridget in his infidelities; but a little reflection served to shew that the less we said, the better: we resolved first to let him see that we disapproved his conduct: but after all, the task did not turn out quite so easy."

"I hope," said I, alarmed at this, "that he did not presume to—"

"Nay, my dear friend," interrupted Ellen, "you need not trouble yourself to resent anything. Who do you think became our champion, after all?"

"Who, pray? I shall envy him."

"Sir Philip's venerable friend, Mr Bennett, the steward. The Duke took leave of us next day with Lord Manchester, but unexpectedly returned without him, alleging that he had found himself giddy. We suspected, that in the course of conversation on the road, he had discovered our sense of his behaviour, and was resolved to brave it out. Perhaps he was willing to be without his Lordship in the house. He came suddenly upon Lady

Vavasour and myself, as we were talking of him ; said that a little wine would soon make him well ; and,—you know his way of doing the strangest things, with an air that would sit well upon him, if he were a better man,—fairly sat down to his bottle an hour before dinner, contriving to make us wait on him ; and saying a thousand gallant things upon the superiority of noble minds to common places, and the dignity of serving one's inferiors. We then dined. He drank during dinner and after it ; and on our quitting the room for the garden, contrived to follow me into the library, where, under pretence of being in an extacy of love and *remorse*, he knelt down and passionately kissed my hands. The strangeness of the thing alarmed me so, that I cried out. He desisted immediately ; and I own I could hardly forbear laughing, when he said it was an odd way of receiving a penitent, and wondered whether confessors in the Romish church shrieked at the sight of people coming to kneel to them. As I wished to make light of my terrors, I tried to laugh too, and said that penitents did not kneel in that manner, and ill-treat their confessors' hands ; but my attempt at pleasantry was ill-timed. He presumed upon it, and grew so unequivocally and unhandsomely alarming, that I cried out again, and was rushing towards the door, when in came Mr Bennett. The Duke

made some laughing remark, that would have done very well on a better occasion, but I was equally frightened and angry, and rushed into Mr Bennett's arms for protection. To say the truth, I was, nevertheless, in such possession of my senses, that I determined on doing a piece of service to Lady Vavasour as well as myself; and secretly resolved that this behaviour of his Grace should be a bar to his future intimacy in the house. Accordingly, I would not stay to listen either to his laughter or his gravity, or his plea of being intoxicated; for in that he finally entrenched himself. Perhaps he had drank wine enough on purpose. I know not what Bennett said. The old gentleman had a wonderful awe of birth and rank, and must have been in a strange dilemma, between his respect for his Grace's quality, and his indignation at his conduct. All I know is, that he manfully expressed his astonishment, and was not to be seduced into quitting his hold of me, for the Duke now professed to be wakened up from his intoxication, called the most sacred names to witness that he had intended nothing disrespectful, and would fain have sent Bennett away for my Lady's woman. We neither did, nor chose to believe him, and Lady Vavasour would not see him again; so he quitted the house, with a courteousness, and an air of grief, that I believe half won over

Mr Bennett to believe in him. He would not have believed, had he seen the billet he left."

"What did it say?" I enquired, too melancholy at the recital to make any remark upon it. I felt, that if it had not been for my volatility, no protector would have been wanting at Mickleham.

"You must know," said Miss Randolph, "that Lady Vavasour, finding the Duke persist in endeavouring to make his peace, wrote him a note, in which she said, that his Grace had forced her to be too sensible that there were none but females in the house; and that she should be sorry to be compelled to apply to Lord Fauconberg, or the Duke of Ormond, to know what steps were to be taken for their security. The Duke wrote an answer of bantering deprecation, couched, indeed, in terms of great deference towards the Countess, and protesting that his 'little lively friend,' as he called me, was under a mistake. But his mortification and resentment were ill concealed. The billet concluded with saying, that her Ladyship need not have threatened him with Lord Fauconberg, when there was a 'female,' like my Lady Fauconberg, who would have done quite as well; and that as to the 'good Duke of Ormond (those were his words), no man

understood better than his Grace, the distinction between gallantries, which the best women excused, and those which enjoyed no such privilege.' He trusted that an early visit to England on the part of his Grace, would enable him to shew how innocent he was, by anticipating her Ladyship's explanations; and that in that case he did not despair of being brought down to Mickleham in the Duke of Ormond's hand, like a good boy, as a fit subject of pardon for the young lady, in whose welfare his Grace took so natural an interest.'

"Thus," concluded Miss Randolph, "this pattern of court gallantry revenges himself on two females; precludes their application to anybody in self-defence; and threatens them through the sides of those who would have been their defenders; for you see, it is clear enough, that he is in possession of my father's secret."

"I see it plainly enough," said I, "and the more I think of it, the more I see a thousand other things, that clear up mysteries of my own. But the mansion is in sight. We will forget this Buckingham for the present, and think of nobler people. Your Countess, of whom I begin to entertain the same opinion as Sir Philip, is infallibly in love with my friend; there is no doubt of it; you yourself have ceased to have any; not

would you ever have doubted, if you had not been as free from pride, as you are from every other unloving quality."

"The Countess has no unloving qualities, believe me," said the dear girl. "She is generous to the last degree, delicate, cordial, the idol of her aunt and the servants, and has ever been so kind and confiding to myself, in short, is so made to love and be loved, that I could have wept upon her hands, and begged and prayed her to love Sir Philip: nay, I should have believed that she loved him, since she became so very particular in shewing her renouncement of what he disliked, had she not expressly given me to understand, that it was 'on her own account, not his.' You remember her words?"

"I do," returned I; "but she only meant, that she did not desire him to be told of it. She was resolved first to prove herself worthy, by some worthy and painful probation; and then, I believe, we could not do her a better service than by letting him know. I am sure this is her feeling of the matter. I was enabled to see it, when you did not, purely because I had need, on my own part, of raising myself to an equality with the object of my love. You had no such necessity, and could only wonder that she did not send, and let the man that loved her, know of his good

fortune. I begin to excuse the impulses of Buckingham. Such a charming mixture of innocence and wisdom, of knowledge, and the want of it, would be chased like a nymph through the galleries of all the courts in Christendom."

"Mercy on me!" cried Ellen, with a pretty air of alarm, "I shall fancy them all behind us. What a want of something to love you must have at court."

"An odd speech," said I, "considering what a different opinion is held at court; and yet it looks very like the truth, now I think of it. I fancied I had been in love myself there, once or twice, but when I again saw the face I am looking upon, I found I had not been faithless."

"Ah, my dear friend!" said Miss Randolph, "I always told the Countess that you had the best heart in the world, and that it was only my vanity that told me it ought to have been mine."

But I must deny myself the pleasure of relapsing into these records, so tempting to my own vanity,—nay, let me say, to my best pride, and my love of all that is lovely.

"I conclude," resumed I, after awhile, "that the worthy Master Dalton said nothing to Lady Vavasour of the attempt that was made on his life, and the assistance Herne afforded him?"

Miss Randolph had never heard a word of it.

She was certain that no such thing had been mentioned. On the contrary, Dalton was always undervaluing the gallantry of men of a reflective turn of mind, and by implication that of the man whom he pretended to love. Dalton left the country at the time, on the plea of looking after an estate; and his wound he attributed to an accident with a fowling-piece.

We agreed that Miss Randolph should go first to Lady Vavasour, and announce my arrival. "She will be very glad of it," said the dear girl, "if only on my account, and you will love her for the way in which she receives you. You will see in a moment, how it was that Sir Philp loved her?"

"But if she now loves him in turn," said I, "what will she feel at his being missing?"

"Are you really uneasy on that score?" answered Ellen, stopping and looking earnestly in my face. "Forgive me for thinking that although he is missing, you were not quite so anxious about it as I now see you are. I fancied that you made the worst of it, and seized the opportunity of awakening an interest in his favour."

My charmer blushed and I smiled at these words. But my smile, I flatter myself, was a proper one and explained itself. "Innocent and

forgiving as you are, dearest Ellen, you have not forgotten that I have been living in a court."

"Pardon me," she returned: "the first thing for which I was inclined to regard you, was your sincerity."

"And you maintained your faith in it," said I, "with a goodness, for which I can never be grateful enough. Notwithstanding however all your faith and your goodness, you must have had misgivings;—nay, they were too just; the court did for me what you suspect; but remember that I have had two wonderful pieces of good fortune in my time, and that one of them was to become the friend of Sir Philip Herne. I cannot be his friend, much less speak of him, and under such charming circumstances, and swerve an atom from the truth."

We paused here, with anxiety, to consider what was best to be done. The deliberations of two persons so well agreed, did not last long. The truth was to be told in everything. Sir Philip's name was to be mentioned to Lady Vavasour, as that of an old acquaintance of all parties, in search of whom I thought it my duty to leave no chance untried, however remote. It was to be stated under what circumstances he disclosed to me his history, how anxiously he bequeathed to

me an interest, which I could no longer keep silent, in the welfare of Lady Vavasour; and how certain I felt, from his description of her, that she would at all events pardon the zeal which had led me to her house. By this time we were in the house itself. Miss Randolph hesitated a moment, and turned pale.

"You go then to seek him, at all events," said she, "in case Lady Vavasour has heard nothing?"

"Should I deserve you," said I, "if I did not?"

The dear creature pressed the hand with which I had taken hers, and with a smile glimmering through her tears, said, "Thank you, and God bless you!"

With these words she hastened up stairs.

I thought I had loved her as well as it was possible to love, before, but at that moment a light broke in upon me. I wondered how I could have lived away from her so long; and found my proposed adventure more heroical than I took it for. My friendship however, for Sir Philip, seemed at the same instant to become stronger than ever; and concluding Lady Vavasour to have at length returned his passion, I waited her appearance, with a heart full of pity and respect.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a long time before the door opened; and when it did, it was Miss Randolph that made her appearance. She had been weeping, and was still trembling. "Lady Vavasour" said she, "has been greatly agitated. You are right, my dear friend; she loves Sir Philip. She owned it in a flood of tears, so passionate as to alarm me, writhing me against her heart, and throwing forth little cries of despair so wretched, that I never heard such melancholy sounds in my life."

The dear girl gave way to a flood of tears herself, and I had the tender pleasure of consoling her. She said, that she should accuse herself of being too easily consoled, of being too happy in my presence, if the distress did not concern us all; "but thank God," she added, "we are all willing to meet it. Lady Vavasour talks of going to find him herself. She says she ought to walk barefoot

to London, and seek him through the plague! By this, judge of what she has been concealing."

Miss Randolph owned that Lady Vavasour had frightened her at first by the vehemence of her self-accusations, and the view she took of Sir Philip's danger. The tenderness of his heart, her Ladyship said, was such, that if his silence had not been of the most compulsory sort, he would not have failed an hour in keeping his promise to write. "However, after her first paroxysms of grief, she cleared up," concluded Miss Randolph; "begged my pardon for thinking in so melancholy a manner; said she owed it to Sir Philip and his friend to act in the best way, which was the calmest; and from this moment we should have nothing to complain of her, not even of her complaints for the past. She is now as tranquil as usual, though her face, in the course of a few minutes, seems absolutely to bear the impression of weeks of suffering. She kissed and congratulated me with one of her beautiful smiles upon your arrival; but would you believe it? Sir Philip, you know, said she was proud, and that Dalton called her confident. Well: she told me in a voice almost inarticulate with emotion, that she had 'an awe of Sir Philip's friend.' She asked whether you were the same person I had formerly described to her, as being so

kind, and making others so much at ease with themselves?"

"'Tis still pride," said I, "but beautiful and departing. As for me, you might have told the Countess, dear Ellen, that I have an awe of her, or something like it. At least, I had, till I thought her in love. Sir Philip worshipped her so, that she always took an exalted station in my fancy, in spite of the resentment I wished to feel against her. But surely, she judges of me, by your flattering help, as of a person anything but alarming."

"She understands you well," replied Miss Randolph, "and sent me to say so, and to thank you for being here. When I return up stairs, she will come down. She bade me say exactly what I pleased, and hopes we all understand one another, and are prepared to be equally explicit. With all her 'awe,' she says she shall feel an inexpressible delight mixed with the anguish of seeing you. 'I have devoted myself to his friend's memory,' said she, 'ever since I was wakened up to a true sense of the difference between him, and these makers of falsehoods; and should he ever wish again to seek me, as I would now seek him, perhaps some day or other I may even yet dare to be found by him.' I guess by this sin-

gular speech, that she has some design which she has not yet explained : but, at all events, love him she does, most fervently ; and therefore in the name of God, we will hope the best. My dear friend, I will now go up, and you may expect her."

Miss Randolph went, and I was again left alone. Sir Philip had described the Countess of Vavasour as taller than women in general ; and in spite of what he said to the contrary, I had pictured her to myself as too tall. Instead of the frank, cordial, and lovely aspect he had described, I had also conceived her to possess a face, beautiful indeed, but haughty, large of feature, and with eyes more piercing than agreeable. The bloom he spoke of, I had confounded with something glaring and insensible, a health which she ought not to have had ; and her figure, I could not help thinking, must be hard and unfeminine. His portrait of her I attributed to love ; and Miss Randolph's had come too late to do away the impression of my own fancy. In short, I imagined her striking, intelligent, proud, and something almost the reverse of attractive ; an heiress and a Countess, with all the dignity that such titles could confer upon her ; and little more but youth and her sex.

Miss Randolph had told me that she had taken

the liberty of waiving all ceremony on my part, and begged her Ladyship not to appear for some hours, or unaccompanied by herself, if it would save any pain to her feelings; but she said, the Countess preferred coming alone, probably because there was pain to be encountered. "I am now convinced," said Ellen, "that her heart and soul are wrapt up in Sir Philip, and that she would undergo martyrdoms for his sake."

The door was opened gently, almost inaudibly, (Miss Randolph afterwards informed me that she did it herself,) and a young lady stood before me in black, who made a profound curtsy. This was to shew respect to Ellen's lover, and to Sir Philip's friend. Perhaps there were other feelings in it, not unconnected with herself, or even with her rank. If so, it was like resuming her dignity in order to subject it; for her manner was the most touching, and had the least pride in it, of any ceremoniousness I ever beheld. It seemed to say, "there has been something in me worthy of Sir Philip's regard, perhaps there is something still: at any rate, there is respect for his friend, and there is sorrow."

My acknowledgment of this honour was as profound. I wished to have put into it, if I could, all the sympathy with which she struck me. She then met me as I advanced, and taking one

of my hands in both hers, said in a low but distinct voice, "Sir Ralph Esher is welcome indeed, both to those whom he brings happiness, and—" Her eyes filled with tears; but she smiled, and motioned me to a seat.

I said that "the honour which was done me by the confidence of so many excellent persons, must be my excuse for venturing to express a hope, that nothing but happiness to all parties would be the result of this day's meeting."

She pressed her hand upon her heart, with affecting earnestness, and said in the same low tone of voice, but not so distinctly, "Miss Randolph has prepared me to find in Sir Ralph Esher a very kind friend."

"I could cut my hand off for this woman," thought I;—"I wonder no longer at Sir Philip." The Countess of Vavasour was at that time about six-and-twenty. She was no taller than Miss Randolph, that is to say, not a bit taller than she ought to have been, nor above a reasonable man's shoulder. Her face was pale; the outline of it, and of her whole person, beautifully feminine; nor had her figure fallen away, though she had lost her colour. Her voice was low, not only on that occasion, but always; and her step so inaudible, that when you saw her in different parts of the room, she seemed as if she had glided

thither on some orb of beauty. I did not observe in her face that exceeding openness, which Sir Philip had described, perhaps because her spirit had retreated inwards, had lost its unconsciousness, and acquired greater power of observation; but nothing could be more sincere than her way of speaking. There was something secret in her eye, though otherwise it was as fine as could be; and her mouth had a rich loveliness, which I had as little looked for as the charming voice. Her eyes were a very dark blue, and her hair chesnut. Upon the whole, the court would have found her wanting. She seemed too liable to be absorbed in reflection; and they would have been afraid of her searching eyes. But if a woman had been made on purpose, I thought she could not have better suited Sir Philip.

The Countess begged me to tell her what my opinion was of the silence of Sir Philip; at what precise time he had promised to write to me; to what part of London I thought he had gone, upon his departure from the vessel; and why he was so unusually reserved as to the object he had in view. Having once mentioned the name of Sir Philip, she spoke, I observed, more freely. In the course of my replies, she rose from her chair, partly in agitation, partly out of an increasing goodwill towards Sir Philip's friend, and came and sat in

the chair next me. I said I had no doubt he had gone to his agent's, whose house was in the heart of the district now most infected with the plague. The reason why he had been silent both as to the place, and the cause of his going there, I had as little doubt, was, that his object had been to enquire after her Ladyship's welfare; and that he did not wish her to be distressed with the memory of it, in case anything happened to him, and she came to the knowledge of what had caused it.

It shot across me, as I uttered these words, that I was doing the very thing I described him as wishing not to be done. I hastened to say so, and to beg her pardon for it, observing that my anticipation of his happiness, since I had the pleasure of coming to Mickleham, had been so much greater than my fears, that I could not help talking to her as I would to myself.

Lady Vavasour wept. "If the pain were greater," said she, "even than it is, I should think you did me a kindness in not withholding it. I suffer for his sake, and endeavour to think that I am acquiring a right to do so. You could not say any noble thing of him, but what I should picture to myself already. Besides, I know he was best pleased, when he was doing the most generous actions. As to those for whom he performed them, it was not to be expected they

could always be worthy. But they may give him their tears."

"Oh, madam," cried I, "only let him be told that you have spoken thus, and we shall all be happy. And he will be told, and we shall be so. I feel it, as surely as I do the coming of to-morrow."

"I will endeavour to hope it too," said the Countess: "I weep thus, partly that he may know of my weeping, and there is pleasure in that, and in telling you so. I confess it is one that I have not known a long time, nor could I give way to it at such a moment, if my hope were not greater even than my fear. Yet fear is present, and hope is away."

"Let us hope, madam, that we shall find him without delay. And we may find him as well in a week as in a year."

"Not so, if he has not written for weeks," returned her Ladyship. "Yet it is not that which I speak of. I must not tell you all I think and feel."

"Recollect, dear Lady Vavasour, we were to be explicit with each other by agreement. You must not flatter me with deeming me worthy of your candour, and then withhold it."

"I deem you worthy of everything," replied the Countess, "knowing you to be Sir Philip's friend; but it is myself—I—that is to say—Pray

refuse me not your entire candour, though I may seem to withhold mine. If I have some thoughts in me which I cannot express, I at least tell you so. I do not pretend to keep to my agreement the best. I am not yet qualified to do so; but you shall know when I am;—*all* shall know, if they wish it."

"If they wish it!" I exclaimed. Some words of Miss Randolph's came into my mind; and it struck me that the Countess had some intention which it pained her to conceal, while she thought it her duty to do so. "You do not doubt, madam, that the sentiments of Sir Philip are the same as when you last saw him? If you do, allow me to say, that I can speak for him as positively as if he were here. I believe there would be only one difference—caused by what he would have had the happiness to see."

Lady Vavasour looked at me with calm eyes. Her tears had been dried up. "'Tis not love only," said she, "that is necessary to Sir Philip."

"Pardon me," I replied, "I think it is, when it comes from Lady Vavasour. Nothing could be wanting, whatever the modesty of love might induce her to think. You have not ceased, madam, I fear, to be proud."

"I should think I had not," returned the Countess, "if I said that I had learnt to be humble."

I have only ceased to be foolish. Miss Randolph tells me, that you know the whole history of Sir Philip. Indeed he could not have bequeathed an interest in me to your care, had he not been just, and told you the truth; nor was it possible he could have been otherwise."

I tacitly intimated that she was right.

"Let me say then to the friend of Sir Philip," continued she—"and let that appellation be my excuse for saying it, (and surely he will not think me wanting in explicitness now,) that Sir Philip owned to myself, like the lover of truth he was, that his esteem for me had diminished."

Her voice, as she spoke this, sunk almost to a whisper.

"Never for your nature, dear Lady, only for—whatever it was—that induced you to depart from it. Methinks it is very daring in a light courtier like myself, to speak so, and to a nature, half of whose good qualities would, I am sure, outweigh all mine. Let the appellation you have just given me, be my excuse as well as your Ladyship's. Believe me, Sir Philip's love, his esteem, and his happiness, would all be at their height, if he could behold you as I do this moment."

"He would know that I loved him," said she, "but how is he to know with what sincerity, with what zeal, with what scorn of that—you will not

think me indelicate, sir,"—her pale face suddenly flashing to crimson.

"Indelicate ! dearest Lady Vavasour ! I repeat the word, only to shew you how inapplicable I hold it to anything you can say."

She rose from her seat with uncontrollable agitation, and stepping to the fire-place, which was near us, leaned her head upon her arms against the mantelpiece. Her whole frame shook as she wept in silence ; and the tears came into my eyes, not only at her suffering, but to think what Sir Philip would have given to see her, and to turn her face to his own.

She dried up her tears, and said, " You will see no more of this ; but I cannot forget that if your friend had had this house to come to, as he ought to have had, he would, in all probability, now have been here. I have been too much occupied with thoughts of myself. It is no longer for me to consider whether his pleasure would be real or not, at the sight of me, or what may be the degree of esteem in which I am held. I believe that his noble nature cannot cease altogether to love the being that has once interested him, if she has not become quite unworthy ; and so believing, I must take every means of endeavouring to let him know it. In a word, Sir Ralph Esher, while you are seeking in one part, I must seek in another ; and

I mention it, that we may arrange the means of informing one another of our movements."

"And Miss Vavasour and Miss Randolph?"

"They will be well pleased to go with me. Change and variety of scene will do my aunt good; and Miss Randolph will, I hope, be reconciled to the necessity by the novelty. But I shall send first, and ask her father's permission. You will not think I am trifling, when I add, that I ask yours."


I expressed my gratitude. The Countess's delicacy reminded me, that it would be a proper delicacy on my part, to ask formal permission to pay my addresses to her charge. I did so; and furthermore begged leave to commission her Ladyship with a message on my part to the Duke, requesting his sanction of them, and informing him that I was "the one person" whom Sir Philip Herne, in the chance that something might befall him, and the knowledge of the interest I had previously taken in Miss Randolph, had chosen to honour with the secret of the lady's birth.

The Countess avowed her satisfaction in seeing a cavalier of the volatile court of Charles the Second thus fixed by the beauty and merits of her friend, and said, that on every account she should lose not a moment in writing.

The settlement of this point consoled me for the drawback which my pleasure had received in


finding that Miss Randolph was not to be left at Mickleham. I was delighted to see the zeal of Lady Vavasour. I was also going away myself, and so far was not sorry to find that my mistress was to be a traveller too. But then we were to go different roads, and my journey would probably be ended before theirs. What a transport would it not have been to steal true-love holidays from court, and have Mickleham Park and Miss Randolph to myself! On no account could such an arrangement have been made. I turned my attention to my lost friend, reproaching myself for not thinking of him as much as before, and equally resolved to leave nothing untried for his discovery, and to hope that he would soon re-unite us all.

But where to seek him? None of us dared to own to each other—hardly to ourselves—that it was possible he had fallen ill in some obscure corner of the metropolis. Whenever we bordered upon the mention of it, our silence and looks too plainly shewed what we dared not utter. I little thought what Lady Vavasour would determine upon that night. After introducing me to Miss Vavasour, she passed the remainder of the day with that lady, leaving me to enjoy some hours of delightful consolation with Miss Randolph. The next morning at breakfast she was missing. She had gone to London, to do what I had left undone.



CHAPTER V.

I NEED not say how we were surprised next morning at finding Lady Vavasour gone ; that is to say, Miss Randolph and myself; for she had told her aunt of her intention during the night, and had received not only her permission, but approbation and encouragement. With a gentleness that amounted to an appearance of timidity, and even weakness, that lady, it seems, had a wonderful degree of enthusiasm, and was remarkable for exhorting those she loved, to let nothing stand in the way of acting up to a sense of duty. She had been a good deal agitated when I first saw her. I saw her again after supper, when she appeared as if nothing had happened, with the exception of looking a little paler. She must have been very handsome when young. Her face, though her cheeks were sunk, retained its delicacy of outline ; and her figure, though deprived of all the flowing beauty



which survived it in the picture by Vandyke, still shewed in its carriage and general movements, in spite of the wrapping shawl, the gracefulness that marks the lady *par excellence*. Sickness appeared to have rendered her rather thoughtful than melancholy. She was fairer than her niece, but resembled her in the eyes and smile. The latter was of that touching description, which seems to say, "However unhappy one may be, it is still pleasant to see another pleased."

I had the honour of a most gracious welcome from this lady. She looked at me longer, and more earnestly than, according to Miss Randolph, she had ever done at a stranger before, and I believe she saw that I was conscious of it. At all events, I blushed, and she hastened to relieve me of my doubts, by saying something very kind. I guessed what was the cause of her scrutiny. She wished to see whether I deserved to be the lover of Miss Randolph. However, she was impressed in my favour by the friendship between me and Sir Philip Herne, for whom she had always shewn a cordial regard. Miss Randolph had observed, that her behaviour to herself was that of a mother, which she attributed to their being together so often, and to her having nursed Miss Vavasour during two long illnesses. She said, that at the termination of the first of these, which took place soon after

the Countess had invited her to take up her abode with them, Miss Vavasour was so affected with her attentions, (though to herself they appeared nothing beyond those of common gratitude,) that the physician said he had never seen anything like it, since the death of a relative of Mr Crashaw's, who was attacked by hydrophobia, and who absolutely expired of insupportable love for his children. He attributed both cases to excessive delicacy in the previous state of the frame, acted upon by an unusual tenderness of heart.

But to return to the Countess :—Miss Randolph, on rising in the morning, received a letter through Miss Vavasour's hands, addressed to her and *to me*. I need not say how this generosity touched me. It was as follows :—

“ DEAR FRIENDS,

“ (For so the friend of Sir Philip Herne will allow me to call him,)—You will pardon me for not having been as explicit in words as I am on paper, or rather for not having been so sure, as I ought to have been, of the duty I have resolved on. But I present to myself the best of men sick and alone, perhaps attended by people worse than usual; and I dare not forego the remotest chance of being near him. I thought and re-thought, many times: I paced my chamber half the night, and communi-

cated at midnight with my dear aunt. At one time it struck me that I had no right to take this task upon myself; at others, that Sir Philip would think the best of it, whether I had or not: at others, that if I were still necessary to his happiness, I had no right to hazard my own life or health. That reflection, in particular, cost me many tears, and cut my very heart; for it seemed as if I had no choice between leaving him unsought, and rendering myself liable to the most terrible charge of vanity and self-seeking.

“ But at the end of these and all other reflections the images still returned, of the best of men sick and helpless, perhaps dying for want of a friend; nay, calling upon the poor wretched friend that knew him so long *without* knowing him; and then, dear friends, I always felt as if I could not stay an instant longer in the house; and so I hope all will forgive me if I am away; for I tremble so with impatience I cannot wait for day-light, since my aunt herself urges me to my duty. She says I never shall forgive myself if I do not go, nor ever be able to look upon *his* face, as a woman that deserves to be his wife ought to look. So, again and again, think the best of me: and if I should die and he come back, tell him to find some one who will know how to value him better than I did,

and that I hope to pray for them both in heaven. Only don't say this if it would make him unhappy.

"My aunt has told the servants that I am going to London on account of a dear friend (Mr Bennett has been told who). They will guess the truth; and so let them. God bless Sir Ralph Esher. I thank him—thank him. He, such a friend as he is, will pardon a loving and repenting woman, for thinking that she could discover anything that might be of service, where he left off. I hope you will receive a letter from me almost without delay, in which I shall be able to tell you more. I go first to my lawyer, and to Dr Scarborough; so you see I mean to think of you, and be prudent as well as anxious. I would not take Sir Ralph away. What right had I? or how could I so interfere with the golden moments of love? He will keep the house happy till I return, with his wit and sweet thoughts; which I hope he will exercise on purpose, and for all our sakes. I am already more cheerful, doing my duty; and I hope we shall all be so. If you are melancholy, Ellen, there is a face in the house will reproach you with its unreproachfulness;—and this you must not suffer. But you will not be. Is not the blessing of love upon you, and shall it not even yet bless

"The restored MARGARET?"

I believe Miss Randolph wept for an hour over this letter ; but the end, with us all, was to make the best of our privation, for everybody's sake. The Countess had not said what she meant to do ; though it appeared afterwards she had determined it. It was no less than to suggest to Mr Waring the raising a hue and cry after his friend on the public walls, and to knock, in her own person, at the door of every plague hospital in London. I felt abashed that I had not done both myself ; but love may be allowed to be greater than friendship ; and I confess, that neither of these measures had entered my imagination. I was agitated enough during my search to be confused, and think little. Love had struck into the heart of the Countess the thoughtfulness as well as zeal of the martyr.

My first impulse was to follow her, but I could do no more than she proposed doing, perhaps not so much ; certainly not, if Sir Philip was sick, and she succeeded in reaching his bed-side ; and Miss Vavasour put a stop to my doubts, by telling me that they not only all expected me to stay, but that the house, to say the truth, had long wanted somebody in it, who knew the world, and could protect them against unwelcome visitors. Lady Vavasour, she said, owing to the peculiar circumstances of her widowhood, and of Sir Philip's courtship, had long lived too much like a lady " in

a book ;” and I will not scruple to express a hope, . added she, with a charming tear in her eyes, that such times will soon be over, and that this house will re-possess its master.

We passed the whole of that day all together. Miss Vavasour, whom I regarded the more, the more I knew her, paid me the compliment of understanding my wishes on that subject, and allowing me to subject my impatience for a private walk with Miss Randolph to my sympathy with the common anxiety. And I was amply repaid for what I lost, by the calm and approving look of affection, which the charming girl did not refuse from time to time to bestow upon me.

CHAPTER VI.

WE were sitting in the evening in the same spot that we had occupied since dinner, Miss Vavasour very pale and tranquil, Miss Randolph reproaching herself with not being unhappier than she was, and myself dividing my thoughts between her and Sir Philip, when I suddenly changed colour, and exclaimed, "Good God! what have I forgotten!"

"You are ill, Sir Ralph!" said Miss Vavasour, anxiously.

"Only a painful thought, madam; and of a nature you would not guess. I am sorry to say I must endeavour to lessen it by going to town."

Ellen looked all anxiety and curiosity.

"You take me," I continued, looking from one to the other, "for a good friend, and one who has at least come to man's estate. What will you say, when I tell you, that I have left no direction at

home for letters to be sent after me ; and that for aught I know to the contrary, there may be this instant a communication waiting me from Sir Philip?"

"You did not know, perhaps," said Miss Vavasour smiling, but at the same time evidently seized with distress on behalf of the Countess, "where you might of a certainty be directed to. At least you had not thought proper to reckon upon it."

"That is true," I replied, "and it is kindly remembered. But the thought should have struck me before. Let me hasten to make amends. Perhaps, even now, I shall be in time to save Lady Vavasour her perilous circuit."

Assistance was afforded me, without delay ; my horse was brought out, my servant mounted ; and with the kindest re-assurance from both ladies, that they should rejoice to see me return, and felt for my fault no more than if it had been their own, I set out full gallop for London.

"No, nor less," said I, as I was leaving the room.

"No, nor less, if you will have it so," returned Miss Vavasour, looking with affectionate kindness upon me. Ellen gave my hand the strongest pressure it had received from her yet. "We have all our faults," said the dear aunt, with tears in her eyes. "What better can we do than be candid and

repair them ! God bless you, Sir Ralph ; you have given us new hope, and we shall endeavour to make the most of it, be assured."

My heart was too full to allow me to speak. I could only bow upon both their hands, kiss them, and depart. In less than an hour I was at Merton, and in less than half an hour more, entered Kennington, where Lady Vavasour was to leave her coach. It was to return next day, in case she remained in town.

I was preparing to look upon it with what philosophy I might, (for I was resolved to water my horses at the same inn, that I might know she had travelled safely) when I thought I saw the very coach leaving the inn yard, and coming towards me. The livery of the coachman was the same : and there were six horses for speed. The out-riders had not been taken with her.

The carriage set off at so hard a rate, that I thought it lucky I had determined not to let it pass me without looking in. But the coachman knew me. In an instant, I was inside, holding the trembling hand of the Countess, who was unable to speak. I briefly told her what had brought me on the road. She expressed her thanks by a look, which seemed to say my anxiety was needless ; and then made signs to me to bid the coachman drive slower, that her voice might be heard.

"I think it necessary to say," observed the Countess, trying, but with little success, to speak calmly, "that the more we have to do, the more I shall endeavour to behave myself, and not give you trouble. I have a paper respecting Sir Philip."

While she was uttering these words, her hands were occupied in detaching as well as they could, from inside her stomacher, the document in question, which she at length drew forth. It was a leaf which appeared to have been torn with violence out of a ledger, and bore the following alarming words in Sir Philip's hand-writing, addressed to his agent:—

"Off Sandown Castle.

"I have been seized, God knows why, and taken on board a brigantine, which—Swedish vessel, but—English privateer. Cap. pretends mistake, which rectify as speedily as—but ca: alter course. Watched—cannot learn name of the vessel; but—Return to France—Tell Mr Esher not to—

"P. H."

I endeavoured by my composure to second the efforts of the Countess, who while I was reading, seemed not to know which way to look.

"Your opinion of what we have to do," said I, "is excellent. Let us be of good heart, and surely here is something to begin with. Here is life, and here is a mistake."

"Are you sure of it?" whispered Lady Vavasour.

"Of the life, do you mean? Surely this is a proof of it."

Seeing her look in a very peculiar manner at the paper, and as if she did not dare to utter what she meant, I observed for the first time, that the ink was red. An involuntary change of countenance betrayed my alarm; but luckily, the outside of the paper was scored with the red lines used in account-books. I looked at it, and said, "There is nothing, I see, on the outside, but the merchant's ink. It was fortunate he could get that, otherwise he must have had recourse to the pen of the surgeon, and pricked his finger. However, that is no matter. Dear Lady Vavasour, I begin to see into this business. Sir Philip has been trepanned by some of those scoundrels who dishonour the flags of nations at war, and prowl about like the pirates of Algiers. Their allegation of a mistake is most likely a pretence. Sir Philip's generosity led him to carry a good deal of property about his person. This was well known aboard the *Royal Charles*, and some of the crew, depend

upon it, have given the intelligence of the privateer. Now it is not for the interest of these men to settle things in a hurry. Sir Philip was watched and prevented from writing. He contrived, however, to slip this hasty document into the hands of some boatman or other stranger; he has learnt, perhaps, from the same man, that the privateer, wherever it may go in the mean time, is bound for the coast of France. She will most probably make the most of Sir Philip's jewels, and then land him on the coast of France."

"Unhurt?"

"No doubt of it. Pray endeavour not only to seem to think so, but to do it. These fellows are bad enough, but it is not their interest to do more than rob and plunder. They pretend to be regular, lawful fighters, and under that pretence, commit all the unlawfulness they can, consistent with smuggling on a large scale; but they stop short of provoking inquisitions for blood. They carry the stranger into a neutral or friendly town; pretend some right of prize, if they are of another nation, or some mistake, if they are not; and the business ends by one of those sacrifices of money, which, as in the case of the law, the payer becomes almost as willing to look to, as the exactor, because he despairs of redress, and is anxious to go about his affairs. And how lucky it is," concluded I,

“that as we should go, at all events, in search of our friend, the scene of our enquiry lies so close at hand! We can all go, thank God, together. I can easily get his Majesty’s and Lord Buckhurst’s permission to join the latter in Paris, instead of attending him on his road; and there will be plenty of time in the interval to look about us.”

With this explanation of the matter, (which luckily came from me with the more force, inas-much as I had faith in what I said) I succeeded in strengthening the touching endurance of the Countess, and the prospect of immediate action assisted it further. I could see that the alarming colour of the ink agitated her extremely; but I remembered Sir Philip’s observing, that nobody but those who had gone through great sorrows, knew how valuable is the least help to a pleasant thought; and I now had an opportunity of seeing it; for Lady Vavasour not only kept her agitation to herself,—avoiding indeed, the least mention of Sir Philip, where she could help it—but endeavouring to occupy us both by pointing out to my attention the different places and country seats, by which we passed. I observed, however, as she occasionally pointed out a mansion, that her hand never ceased shaking throughout the journey.

On arriving at the door, Miss Vavasour was at

the window, and poor Ellen came running out, expecting to find Sir Philip; for in looking out of the carriage window and waving my hand to them, I had smiled. I did it, to imply that nothing had occurred of a calamitous nature to ourselves, and to prepare them to make the best of what was to be done; but Miss Randolph, young, sanguine, and ready to believe that all other happiness was to follow upon and complete her own, had made up her mind that her troubles were over. I hastened to say that we had some news, and better than we looked for; but this did not hinder her from being greatly alarmed, when she felt the Countess tremble as she kissed her in silence. She concluded that we had discovered Sir Philip; that he was ill of the plague, and that we were not allowed to go near him. I made a brief explanation to the ladies. Miss Vavasour took her niece to her heart, and said, with her usual gratitude for a comfort, "Thank heaven you have come back to us! We shall now act together, and that is a great blessing?"

CHAPTER VII.

I NEED not say that we lost no time in crossing the channel. The permission to join Lord Buckhurst at Paris, was easily obtained; and in the course of a few days, I was busy on the French coast, enquiring at houses, and making friends with smugglers. All the ladies accompanied me wherever a carriage could go; but Lady Vavasour never quitted my side. If blessings could have helped her, we should soon have made an end; for what with her beauty and generosity, and the unaffected way in which she reconciled to themselves the inconveniences of their squalid cabins, they seemed not to know whether they should think her lady or angel. They guessed her secret, however. At another time I should have smiled at the national instinct—indestructible under the rudest mode of life—which discovered invariably that she was in search of a lover or husband. The inqui-

ries were in general made by myself; but, whether the Countess spoke or not, the eye, male or female, was sure to glance at her, and pronounce what was sometimes whispered to her companion. The smugglers, at first, were very shy, though rarely disposed to be uncivil. The companionableness of "the lady," soon made them see there was no harm in us. I plainly told them the whole truth, short of her concern in it, which they saw well enough; and though they sometimes gave us answers, singularly, and, as it should seem, wilfully, distressing for so kind a people, we had the melancholy satisfaction of ascertaining that they really knew very little about the matter. It was in the great trading towns we found we had to enquire.

I will pass over a very melancholy time, by saying, that we enquired to no purpose, both in France and Holland, not by reason of any difficulties owing to the war, for money opened to us every source of information: but we knew not the name of the vessel; and though our agents made guesses at several, chiefly Dutchmen, which were likely enough to contain our lost friend, yet nothing was known of any one answering his description, nor indeed of anybody so remaining in durance. The last person who paid ransom at Flushing, was indeed an English gentleman, but that was before the date of the adventure, and he had long

gone home. Lady Vavasour bore her grief as became her, though I could observe that her cheek gradually became thinner. She resolved, while I went to Paris, to settle in a mansion on the coast between France and Holland, so as to have the quickest information of vessels on either side. I saw the ladies fixed with her, and longing, on every account, to make a speedy end of our message to the French King, hastened to join Lord Buckhurst in Paris. At the end of another fortnight I was in England, wondering to find my anxiety so much appeased by these rapid changes of place. Louis's court made ours appear like a parcel of "hail fellows well met," which vexed me; and I tried hard to think him dull; which Buckhurst swore that he was. Besides, there was a talk of certain monies to be paid to a friend of ours, which made him look like a footman, and which I can never bear to think of.*

* This must be an allusion to Charles's becoming a pensioner to the French king. It is the only notice of it in these *Memoirs*, though the most important and disgraceful event of his reign: but we see what occasioned the author's silence.—*Edit.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE court was then at Oxford, having been driven from Salisbury by some of its retainers, who brought the plague with them from London. As I was obliged to pay my respects to his Majesty before I went anywhere else, I was unable to make my first visit to Sir Philip's agent; but I obtained a letter from him through the office of the Commander-in-chief. There was no intelligence of our friend, nor had any news found its way to Mickleham Park. As to Mr Waring, he had not been heard of since he left London in August. The imprudence of the Catholics, emboldened by having the Royal Family and the favourites on their side, had again brought them into trouble with those whom it was not convenient for the festive poverty of the court to disoblige; and it was supposed, that it would be even necessary to make a show of renewing some of the old persecutions. Father

Waring might, or might not, I thought, be withheld from appearing by these circumstances. His judgment might be against his party, but his affection would be with them. He was out of favour with the Duke for warning him against too violent a shew of his love of Popery, which he had done from the first moment of the return of the Royal Family, when his Highness paid him particular attention, and invited him to give his opinion. From delicacy, therefore, as well as from other feelings, he would now think it incumbent upon him to suffer in company with his brethren. I found afterwards, that he was at once suffering for his party and searching for his friend.

The plague had been decreasing as the winter advanced. At length a heavy fall of snow seemed entirely to quench it, though multitudes still died in consequence of the long series of afflictions. The court itself returned to Whitehall in February, which was not sooner than any timid gentleman might be seen thereabouts; and yet such had been the dread inspired among the gentry, that scarcely a coach was to be seen in the streets, but what came in its train.

Lady Vavasour had begged that I would consider myself master of Mickleham Park during her absence, and Miss Randolph hoped I should visit it frequently. I used it therefore as if it had

been a country-house of my own, and never failed to be struck by the transition from noise to tranquillity, and *vice versâ*, which my journey to and from town presented. Gay as the court had always been, I think I never knew it so much so as at that time. The plague seemed to have acted upon it like a fright, which, though it was too frightened to speak of at the time, it had felt severely, and was resolved to be revenged upon in due season. Accordingly, lords and ladies, men and maids of honour, King, Duke, and every one else, (except the poor Queen, who had had a second miscarriage,) were like a parcel of children come home for the holidays. Business had accumulated like debt; but it was all thrust off upon Monk, Coventry, and Hyde, who paid dearly for their love of power in the abuse plentifully lavished upon them for everything which the favourites made to go wrong; and as if this were not enough, they abused one another. The King, it is true, did what he could to expedite money matters, by making acquaintance with Members of Parliament, and taking them into corners by the button; but in this he had an eye to his pleasures, and to the diminution of business itself. To be sure, he lost as much by it as he gained, for he was obliged to make promises which he could not fulfil; and then he was afraid to see people's faces; and men that loved

and would have died for him in May, came to hate him by September. He was also obliged to lie a good deal, which became inconvenient to more persons than himself. I remember his telling me once, when he wanted a rich old country gentleman to do him a service, that he intended to make him a baron. The old gentleman was an acquaintance of mine; so to make him happy, and to quicken his good offices, I did as I saw the King wished me to do, and announced to him his good fortune. When the service was performed, the good man was inconsiderate enough to thank his Majesty beforehand. The King put on a grave face, and said he had never expressed any such intention. As ill luck would have it, I happened to come upon them at the moment, and the poor gentleman had the innocence to appeal to me as his authority. I said, with as much impudence as I could muster up, and not without a wish to give his Majesty a rap on his sacred knuckles, (for I never became a finished courtier, or I should have been a Viscount by this time,) that I had been under a great mistake, and that his Majesty certainly never had any such intention.

“But you told me he had expressed it,” said the honest-hearted gentleman.

“I did so,” said I, gaily, “but it was a misconception on my part. I confounded one in-

tention of his Majesty's with another, and am quite certain that he never designed any such thing."

My old friend went about, telling everybody how ill I had used him; and the King thought proper not to look on me for two or three days.

To give an instance, however, of this monarch's good humour, and of his placability when in the wrong (an excellent quality, for anybody may be placable when in the right,) I shall carry this story to the end. Seeing him suffer under his alienation, (for he believed what I said, and liked to talk with me,) I cut my chin a little on the fourth day, and went dabbing it in his presence.

"The barber has cut your chin, Mr Esher," said his Majesty.

"Pardon me, sir, I cut it myself."

"How did you do that, Ralph?"

"I was in despair, sir, at your Majesty's not directing a word to me for these three days; so I cut my chin, being sure that your Majesty would be kind enough to make your present inquiry."

The King laughed, and was excellent friends with me directly. "'Tis a wise despair, Ralph," said he, "that cuts its chin instead of its throat."

"Ah, sir," I replied, "suicides ought to con-

sider, more than they do, the feelings of those for whom they suffer. I know your Majesty would have me stop short of my throat, so instead of *sui*, I became a *mentumicide*."

"The idea is judicious," returned the King, "though I doubt the compound is hardly warrantable; for you have not been the death of your chin. I wish Pownall would cut his, and give a piece to the Viscount.* Touching your suicides, I suspect they are as often sulky and stupid as anything else. They hope to vex somebody. I remember a little girl in the Low Countries, not more than twelve years old, who went and threw herself into the canal, because her sister refused to give her sugar with her bread and butter. She vowed she would make her repent the refusal, and this was her way of doing it."

His Majesty was a very shrewd as well as lively observer. I know not whether kings can be good judges of suicide, but the principle of vexing somebody goes a great way. I can easily believe that there are people, who if they were prevented by circumstances or scruples from cutting your throat, will cut their own rather than not cause you distress. It is a kind of malignant appeal to your pity,—a bequeathing of their memory to you on any terms. According to Sir Philip's

* Who these gentlemen were does not appear.

mode of thinking, there would be a compliment in it, nay, even a perverted sociability, a resentment for not being more in your thoughts while living. I confess I should be inclined to look upon it in a worse light. I should doubt the love that could be all retrospect for itself, and bad prospect for me. But then it would not think of all this. It is in too great a hurry. Let me at all events treat the opinions of my friend with reverence, for generosity and hope were ever sure to be with him.

The sanguineness of my temper kept me in a constant expectation of my friend's return, though we now counted his absence by months instead of weeks. At the end of a year we concluded the vessel had taken a long voyage before its intended revisit to the coast of France, on the limits of which Lady Vavasour still continued. The proclamation had produced no notice; Sir Philip was known to few at court, except the Duke of Ormond and his family. The latter made such inquiries of me from time to time, as shewed what a hold he had taken of their hearts; and Miss Hamilton used to watch my face when she saw me among them, till somebody asked the usual question. As to the Duke of Ormond, I was tantalized by perpetual expectations of his arrival, and disappointments. The interests of Ireland, a country that seemed placed

by the side of the larger one for nothing but bad behaviour on either side, like an ill-assorted parent and child, incessantly required his presence; and the cabals of his enemies at court, particularly of Buckingham, as incessantly seemed to demand his appearance there, for the very sake of the country he governed. He preferred, as usual, his undoubted to his probable duty; and put his visits off, to my unspeakable impatience. I would have found some occasion to go over to Ireland myself; but delicacy withheld me; for the truth was, I was as good a friend of the King, as I was an ill courtier; and my income was yet so small, that not chusing to treat Miss Randolph on a footing less than that of any other young lady, and understanding that her father intended to do as much as lay in his power for the husband he should approve, it became me on no account to press a matter, which was nevertheless very near my heart. As a man of birth, and one who had prospects under government, I had pretensions which in the course of a few years might have warranted my paying my addresses to anybody. I delighted to think this, both as a compliment to my mistress, and as a set-off to the pride of the Duke of Ormond, whose delay sometimes piqued me a little. I thought I saw in it an indifference, perhaps a disinclination; and fancied, that if he

had liked the match, he might have done what he could for it at a distance, as well as in England. I found afterwards, that having been made acquainted with my former levity towards Miss Randolph, he wished to make a further trial of my attachment. He need not have been afraid. Absence, and the effect her letters had upon me, would have proved to me that I really loved, had I not known it by the delight I took in her presence. I longed to grow rich for her by my own means, and sometimes regretted that the charm of Sir Philip's friendship had encouraged in me a nicety of conscience, inconvenient to a rising statesman. At other times, I had a passionate desire to be a soldier. I thought, that besides carrying me by a short road to glory and riches, it would be a help to the discovery of my friend: but a little reflection, aided by the melancholy stories of gentlemen volunteers, their jaundices, their deaths, and above all, the lingering disease of their tailors' bills, put an end to that fancy; especially as I might leave one part of the world, which was the centre of news, only to be fixed in another where I could hear nothing. Miss Randolph's letters described Lady Vavasour as very quiet and amiable,—seldom saying anything of Sir Philip, but evidently in a constant state of anxiety, and unable to help shewing it

in her countenance at the least approach of any one to the house. She had planted her daily chair, at a window commanding the avenue; and the commonest visitor could not make his appearance, not excepting the gardener coming to his work, but she watched till she ascertained whether he brought any news. Miss Vavasour was almost always with her; nor had there been a time when the three ladies appeared to be so much wrapped up in one another, or pursued their task of reading and working with a spirit of more resolute sympathy; I mean, with a greater endeavour to make the best of their position.

I was pondering on these things one night, as I was sitting in the parlour at Mickleham, looking at a beautiful moon, and delaying to go to bed, when Bennett came in and told me, that there was a dreadful fire in London. One of the tradesmen had brought news of a dreadful fire the day before; but as every fire was dreadful, and I had seen the good people of London run away from a cow, crying out, a "mad bull," I had thought nothing of it, and was prepared to think as little of the new one. The old gentleman, however, assuring me that both fires were one and the same, that it had burnt a whole night and day, and was visible as far as Epsom, I thought it time to see into the truth of the matter. I ordered my horse,

and promising to bring back a correct account, purely to satisfy the house that there was no such thing, (for some of the domestics had kindred in London,) I set off at a round gallop, looking towards the north, as if I could already discern what I had doubted. Nobody was stirring at Leatherhead; but at Epsom, sure enough, there was a great commotion, all the people being at their doors, and vowing they saw the fire; which, however, I could not discern. That there was a fire, however, and a dreadful one, was but too certain, from accounts brought into the town both by travellers and the inhabitants; so with the natural curiosity which draws us on and on upon much less occasions, especially on a road, I pushed forward, and soon had pretty clear indications of a terrible fire indeed. I began to consider what the King might think of it, and whether he would not desire to have his active servants about him. At Morden the light was so strong, that it was difficult to persuade one's-self the fire was not much nearer; and at Tooting you would have sworn it was at the next village. The night was, nevertheless, a very fine one, with a brilliant moon.* Not a soul seemed in bed in the villages,

* Evelyn, speaking of this night, says, that it was "light as day for ten miles round about, after a dreadful manner."—

though it was ten o'clock. There was a talk of the French, as if they had caused it. By degrees, I began to meet carts laden with goods; and on entering the borders of Southwark, the expectation of the scene was rendered truly awful, there was such a number of people abroad, yet such a gazing silence. Now and then one person called to another; but the sound seemed as if in bravado, or brutish. An old man, in a meeting of cross-roads, was haranguing the people in the style of former years, telling them of God's judgments, and asserting that this was the pouring out of that other vial of wrath, which had been typified by the Fiery Sword,—a spectacle supposed to have been seen in the sky at the close of the year sixty-four. The plague was thought to have been announced by a comet.

Very different from this quieter scene, was the one that presented itself, on my getting through the last street, and reaching the water-side. The comet itself seemed to have come to earth, and to be burning and waving in one's face, the whole city being its countenance, and its hair flowing

Memoirs, vol. i. p. 391. second edit. 4to. Sir Ralph does not seem to make the light so strong, though he does not absolutely say it was otherwise. Perhaps Evelyn speaks of a later hour. The flames appear to have become visible afterwards to the distance of forty miles.—*Edit.*

towards Whitehall in a volume of fiery smoke. The river was of a bloodish colour like the flame, and the sky over head was like the top of a pandemonium. From the Tower to St Paul's there was one mass of fire and devastation, the heat striking in your eyes, and the air being filled with burning sparkles, and with the cries of people flying, or removing goods on the river. Ever and anon distant houses fell in, with a sort of gigantic shuffling noise, very terrible. I saw a steeple give way, like some ghastly idol, its long white head toppling, and going sideways, as if it were drunk. A poor girl near me, who paced a few yards up and down, holding her sides as if with agony, turned and hid her eyes at this spectacle, crying out, "Oh, the poor people! oh the mothers and babies!" She was one of the lowest of an unfortunate class of females. She thought, as I did, that there must be a dreadful loss of lives; but it was the most miraculous circumstance of that miraculous time, that the fire killed nobody, except some women and infirm persons with fright.

I took boat, and got to Whitehall, where I found the King in a more serious and stirring humour than ever I saw him. Mr Pepys, begging God to forgive him for having an appetite at such a crisis, and interrupting his laughter at the supper

they gave him, with tears of pity and terror, had brought word to his Majesty that the whole city would be destroyed, if some of the houses were not blown up. The King accordingly not only dispatched myself and many others to assist, but went in person with his brother, and did a world of good. I never saw him look so grim, or say so many kind things. Wherever he went, he gave the people a new life, for they seemed dead with fright. Those who had not fled, (which they did by thousands into the fields where they slept all night,) seemed only to have been prevented from doing so, by not knowing what steps to take. The Lord Mayor, a very different one from his predecessor, who shewed a great deal of courage during the plague, went about like a mad cook with his handkerchief, perspiring, and lamenting himself; and nobody would have taken the citizens for the same men who settled my court friends at the battle of Naseby. The court, however, for that matter, was as frightened as the city, with the exception of the King and one or two others; so terrible is a new face of danger, unless there is some peculiar reason for meeting it. The sight indeed of the interior of the burning city, was more perilous, though not so awful, as its appearance outside. Many streets consisted of nothing but avenues between heaps of roaring

ruins ; the sound of the fire being nothing less than that of hundreds of furnaces, mixed up with splittings, rattlings, and thunderous falls ; and the flame blowing frightfully one way, with a wind like a tempest. The pavement was hot under one's feet ; and if you did not proceed with caution, the fire singed your hair. All the water that could be got seemed like a ridiculous dabbling in a basin, while the world was burning around you. The blowing up of the houses marked out by the King, was the ultimate salvation of some of the streets that remained ; but as a whole, the city might be looked upon as destroyed. I observed the King, as he sat on his horse at the beginning of Cheapside, and cast his eyes up that noble thoroughfare ; and certainly I had never seen such an expression in his countenance before. Some said that he now began to see the arm of heaven in these visitations, and that he resolved to bethink himself from that time, and lead a new life. I know not how that was. The new life certainly was not led ; but his thoughts were very solemn : perhaps they would have been more so, had not a madman pretended to show him the arm of heaven literally stretched over the city, " like unto the arm of a blacksmith ;" and had not another afterwards (who got hung for it) pretended that he had helped to set the city on fire, and that

the Papists had employed him. The poor wretch was himself a Papist, and numbers believed in him. Others said the French did it; others the Dutch; and others the old Republicans; particularly as the 3rd of September, that is to say, the day on which it did not break out, was the anniversary of Cromwell's victory of Dunbar. Many thought that all these, Papists and Protestants, had made up a plot; but the opinion that secretly obtained most ground, was, that it was a punishment for the sin of gluttony; the greatest argument, next to the looks and consciences of the aldermen, being the appalling fact, that the fire began at Pudding lane, and ended at Pie corner. The fire raged four days and nights; and on the fifth of September, London, from the Tower to Fleet street, was as if a volcano had burst in the midst of it, and destroyed it, the very ruins being calcined, and nothing remaining in the most populous part, to shew the inhabitants where they had lived, except a church here and there, or an old statue. I looked into it, three days afterwards, when the air was still so hot, that it was impossible to breathe; and the pavement absolutely scorched the soles of my shoes.

The loss of property by the fire was of course far greater than that by the plague, and yet assuredly

it was not felt a thousandth part so much, even in the city; for money, even with the lovers of it, is not so great a thing, after all, as their old habits and affections. The wits at court never chose to say much about the plague; but the fire, after the fright was over, was a standing joke. And the beneficial consequences to the city itself soon became manifest, in the widening and better building of the streets, an improvement which came in aid of the cleanliness that was resorted to against the plague; so that instead of a judgment against the King and his government, Rochester said, in his profane way, that heaven never shewed a judgment of a better sort.

The poets called that year the *Annus Mirabilis*. Mr Dryden wrote some fine verses on it, in which all his wonders consisted of the fire, and the fight at sea. But the fight was not more wonderful than that of the preceeding year, described in these pages, except that Rochester behaved well in it; and the fire, though vast and overwhelming, never impressed me throughout with the depth of awe, occasioned by the presence of that death in the streets, the "Lord have mercy" upon the doors, the stories I heard of pest-carts and pits, and the spectacles I saw of that madman as if in his grave-clothes, and the

other who accosted me. Mr Dryden should have added to his list of wonders, the belief given to lying Dick Talbot, when he swore he would kill the Duke of Ormond; and the pulling of wigs between the most noble the Marquis of Dorchester, and the high and mighty prince, George, Duke of Buckingham.

In my mind, the next year should have been recorded as more wonderful; for it not only contained the flight, imprisonment, and restoration to favour of the said Duke, the real rage of the King at Miss Stewart's marriage, the downfall of Clarendon, and "the death of the ever-young and immortal old Cowley," (as Rochester called him) but I saw the Dutch fairly up the river, burning our ships in our very teeth; and furthermore, I saw, *hisce oculis*, the whole court in a quiver of consternation at the news, already fancying them at Whitehall-stairs, and wanting to go to York out of the way! I mention no names, but the thing is true, and it was all but universal; I mean, throughout those bold and patriotic precincts. The citizens were finely laughed at during the fire, for running away by whole streets full, at the cry of the "French are coming;" but they might have turned the tables upon us with interest, if they had seen —— and ——, asking with pale faces what was to be

done, and —— helping the ladies' to pack up. "And the women!" said Killigrew, "what in the name of God had *they* to fear." "Nothing in the name of God," said I; "but you will allow there was something in the name of Dutchmen."

CHAPTER IX.

As I had a story of the plague, so I have one of the fire, not so pleasing perhaps to happy lovers, but surely as strange. Sir Christopher Wren told it me, when he came to court upon the business of the new churches. It concerns a personage, known for many years in one of the streets of the city, by the name of Dirty Levens, an appellation under which nobody would have suspected a romance to lie hid. He was a man of great wealth and respectability in his 'trade, which was that of a cloth merchant; and though careless in his appearance, and indifferent to the regards of the frequenters of his shop, was remarkable for the softness of his address to women.

This person, who for many years together, had been seen occasionally at the door of his shop, looking like anything but a gallant, and for nearly as many more totally disappeared from it, having

never stirred from some upper apartments at the back of the house, was suddenly seen after the fire, dressed (for him) as if he meant to be a bridegroom in his old age, and courteously receiving the thanks of all whom he had assisted during the calamity; which were not a few. In the hurry of his assistance, scarcely anybody had recognized him; but when he had the good fortune (for so it seemed) to have his house burnt down, and a great part of his property destroyed, he seemed to rise from the dead with the new street, and everybody wondered to behold him.

It seems, that at the age of forty, Mr Levens was about to lead to the altar a beautiful woman, whom he had courted for a dozen years. She had been pursued with ill intentions by a nobleman, who unfortunately made an impression on her heart. A discovery of his designs revolted her, but not without affliction; and though her father turned him away from the door, yet the old gentleman was so impressed with a love of rank, that he behaved coldly to the new lover, weakly avowing his inclination for a lord, and hoping that another, and better than the last, would do justice to his daughter. This naturally threw a great deal of delicacy and diffidence into the approaches of the young merchant. His visits were rare and short; but he was of a temper

which difficulties made zealous; and his passion increased by the very means which his father took to destroy it. One visit from him, was as good as a thousand from a common lover. In two years he seemed to have known his mistress twenty. In the course of two or three more, he avowed his love, which had long been plain enough, and which the mother encouraged; nor had the heart, which he valued the more, the more he knew it, remained insensible. The father, however, would not give his consent. The mother, touched by an assiduity which flattered not only herself and her daughter, but the whole sex, (of whose praises, with a sort of honest cunning, Mr Levens was not sparing,) grew more zealous in his behalf, in proportion to her husband's objections; the dispute grew into a family quarrel; and for the space of the next five or six years, the merchant scarcely saw his mistress; "at least," said he, "not in the ordinary way; but she was almost always before my imagination. I rose with her in the morning; went to bed, saying a prayer for her, as if her hand was in mine; and I loved the very name of woman for her sake." By this we may see, that notwithstanding his being a tradesman, Mr Levens was a proper enthusiast in love, and knew how to ex-

press the passion. Indeed he was a very intelligent man, though a little shy and wanting in address on ordinary occasions. He was fond of books and music; and the way in which Sir Christopher became acquainted with him, was a meeting of the wardens of his parish, respecting a new church, when he delivered some opinions on architecture which surprised the builder, and made the rest of the company doubt whether his solitude had not been owing to the excess of his learning. He made a selection of some of the most beautiful passages of Italian poetry with his own hand, having learnt the language on purpose to read Petrarch.

At the expiration of the six years, the father died; and he so died, that the mother and daughter could not only admit the visits of their constant friend without uneasiness, but a tender conscience would have been violated in doing otherwise; for the old gentleman had expressed his regret at leaving his daughter without a protector, and with the selfishness common to such minds in their most affectionate moments, had exacted from her a promise that she would marry her lover as soon as possible, and nobody else. It must be added, that his finances had grown worse and worse, in consequence of his living in a style to warrant the

addresses of a nobleman; while on the other hand, the cloth of Mr. Levens had turned into so much cloth of gold.

The mother, with her still blooming daughter, a beautiful woman of eight and twenty, now came to London, for the purpose of seeing her married to Mr. Levens. Twelve years had elapsed since our enamoured merchant first saw his mistress: he was now forty; and a momentary regret would cross him, that he had not been able to marry ten years sooner; but then he reflected that he should begin life as it were again; that he should have a double youth; and that had he been more fortunate earlier, he could not have known how long a charming woman would have waited for him.

The wedding day was fixed: no friends were invited: they were to be feasted a week or two afterwards: for the present, everything was to be kept snug and quiet. Mr. Levens hardly knew that anybody existed but his mistress, not even her mother. How was he to have eyes for his friends? And then the secrecy was more becoming. The weather, after long rain, was suddenly beautiful; the lady, who had never been in town before, was shewn all the sights in London and Westminster; happy days were spent in making her acquainted with everything familiar to himself, as if they were not to have a thought but

in common; and on the morning of the happiest day of all, the sun arose in the splendour so beautifully described in the psalm, "coming forth out of his chamber like a bridegroom, and rejoicing to run his course."

Two hours after breakfast, Mr Levens was waiting for his mistress, in a room with which she had declared herself highly pleased. He expressed his fears, that she would find the city houses dull, after those of the country. "I did it," said he, "partly because I thought so, and partly that she might contradict me, and shew me how she preferred my dull house to her garden and her fine prospect." And he told her so. She laughed, and said, that "this room had a garden too, for there was an elm tree, which it looked upon; and as to prospect, they should there pass their days together, which was the happiest prospect she desired, in this world or the next."

The door of this apartment was opened at the time he expected, and the mother came in alone. She smiled, but looked pale and anxious. She informed him, "that her daughter had been taken ill in the night with a fever. It was a sharp attack, and the physician had been sent for; but all would no doubt be well in a few days, as her child was of a good constitution, and had never been ill before." Alas! this good constitution probably gave way

under the sudden blow, sooner than would have been the case with a less hardy one. In a word, the young lady had been seized with one of those sudden colds and fevers, too common with visitors of the metropolis who have not been there before, and who make sudden changes in hours and clothing. With all her sweetness and good sense, she was not without a portion of the vanity natural to one of her face and person, (Mr Levens called it a wish to please,) and she had imprudently adopted a style of dress she had been unused to. The mother made some remonstrances, but acquiesced at sight of the improvement it made in her appearance. In a few days she saw her daughter consigned to the grave.

From that day, our unfortunate citizen, from one of the neatest and most conversible of men, became one of the slovenliest and the most reserved. He never said a word of his betrothed bride; nor did people in general see any change in the expression of his face, which was naturally contemplative. But every one remarked how careless he had become in his dress—how uncombed his hair was—how squalid his hands and face. At length he acquired the title of Dirty Levens, nor did he seem to care for it. The boys would sometimes salute him with it, as he stood casting an indifferent eye on the passengers at his door; but his indif-

ference became none the less. His windows partook of the dirt. People said it would hurt his business; but as he was observed to have more custom than ever, others said he did it to attract attention. The rumour of this charge came to his ears. He looked quiet at it, and said nothing; but it was noticed from that time, that he suffered his windows to be cleaned, and that he himself disappeared from his doorway.

This latter change was owing to an old servant, who being of a scrupulous cleanliness, and seeing her master so unlike his former self, had often wished to let him know that she did not think it became him. Affection and reverence had hitherto kept her silent, as well as somewhat of fear, for she had never seen him so moved with anger as when he found the room dusted, the day it had been re-opened after the funeral. He permitted it to be dusted thenceforward, as well as the other rooms, but not a particle in it was to be moved. The furniture all stood in the same places: two chairs, in one of which she had sat, were near the table; and on the table were some decanters and glasses, which looked, for twenty years, as if they had awaited her coming.

At the period I am speaking of, a violent wind blew open the casement, and threw down one of these glasses. Mr Levens saw it when he next

went into the room, and sternly enquired of the old woman why she had dared to move anything in that room. The woman, struck dumb at his manner, pointed to the window, which reminded him of the storm that had taken place in the night. He softened directly, and for the first time since his calamity, alluded to his loss.

"I would have it the same for ever," said he, "as she left it—the same as myself."

"Ah, sir," said the old woman, "the room is the same, but not you."

"How so, Martha? I hope I am not unkind. You must forgive me on this occasion."

"You are unkind to nobody but yourself," said the old servant, shaking her head.

"I am not unkind to myself," mildly answered Mr Levens, "I am kind. I do not wish to distress myself; I wish for nothing but to be the same as I was, and to remain so, till I join her. I am older, it is true; but I was not very young then."

"But those hands, sir, and that dress. Forgive me, dear Mr Richard," (for so she called him from a youth,) "but I always fear for your health, and God does not love dirt."

"Does he not?" said Mr Levens, smiling: "Why, do you know what this dirt, as you call it, is? 'Tis the stuff of which the earth is made—of which we are all made—except the blessed angels;

and what care I for this hand, except that she touched it! 'Tis the same hand, Martha, that she touched. I grudged the first drop of water I put to it."

"You may grudge the blessed water, sir; but it is not the same hand."

"Not the same hand?"

"No, sir: your bridegroom's hand was as clean and white as any lord's in the land, and so was my young lady's. I think I see it now, and yours laid upon it on that table, for I remember you pressed it in that manner, when she praised the room. Then your hand was your own hand; but now!—I would not swear, that if she was to see it, she——"

"Hold, Martha, say not a word more; and say not a word when you see me again. You will not be the less in the right for it, nor shall I cease to think so."

Next morning Mr Levens appeared at breakfast, an altered man, as far as hands and face went. Martha said nothing, and he did not look at her. She hoped he would now go abroad, and live and be merry like the rest of the world; for though he suffered her to have as many visitors as she pleased, and had himself a regular party of friends every week, who played music, and discoursed of what was going on, new inventions in philo-

sophy and the arts, he had hitherto altered not one of his other habits, nor ever gone out of the house but for an evening walk, which he always took in one spot. But he disappointed her, for he now discontinued even that. He no longer appeared, even in the shop. He confined himself entirely to the floor containing the apartment above-mentioned, and to the little garden containing the elm tree; having no better reason, he said, in the first instance, than a foolish shame at what his neighbours would say of the change in his appearance. Gradually, however, he got a dislike of going out, on its own account, and then an absolute dread of it; the additional delicacy of health produced by this mode of life, increasing the evil which ought to have been conquered for its sake. In this way he lived for ten years more; his business going on well by means of his foreman, who was taken by strangers for himself, and he all the while inhabiting an imaginary world, in which the strangest thoughts that could come were those of the former common places about him; so that he said, when the King was restored, it appeared not at all astonishing to himself, though it amazed his friends; nor, if adventures a thousand times more marvellous had taken place, would they have seemed to him half so bewildering, as the idea of the street out of doors which he had known from a boy, and of a parcel of people

going to and fro upon business, common to the men in his own warehouse. Whatever of a common everyday nature presented itself to his mind, was painful, and seemed new. All that was strange, was a relief, and reconciled the world to his fancy.

“ I felt this,” said Mr Levens, “ without exactly knowing why, till the light suddenly broke in upon me, together with this dreadful fire. The cry of fire, and the sight of it close upon me, put me at first into despair for my room. I then thought of my old servant, and having seen her in safety, I thought of others. It occurred to me like a flash of lightning, that the beloved person whose memory I worshipped, would wish me to be of use to my fellow-creatures. I wondered I had never thought of it before. I begged her pardon and her assistance in a brief prayer, (for love had made me a sort of Catholic,) and after helping my foreman to look to the safety of our own premises, I flew among my neighbours, taking a box from this, and a parcel from that, plunging into rooms, and removing furniture ; in short, busying myself, as if I would make up for the idleness of twenty years. Nobody, for my activity, could have suspected who I was, even if anybody, in that dreadful emergency, could have thought of enquiring. It was with more anguish than I can ex-

press, that I saw my house consumed. My heart failed me, in spite of my new efforts ; and, seated in a little bed-room at Lambeth, to which place I had helped a sick neighbour, I was casting in my mind, in what corner to take refuge, when word was brought me that London was no more !—that thousands of houses were burnt as well as my own ;—that my own street and all the others around it, were a heap of undistinguishable ruins ; and that millions of men, including my oldest acquaintances, would have to begin life anew.

“ On the announcement of this calamity (and you,” concluded Mr Levens, addressing Sir Christopher, “ will judge me charitably when I say it,) I rose up like a new man. If the world was new to so many others, it might be new to me ; and I found it so. There was a new face of things, which no longer made me sick at heart and in fancy. The church alone had escaped a destruction which involved every other building dear to my eyes ; and that too assisted me, for my thought of her was what it is now, and ever will be (it is the same as my hopes of heaven) ; and there the church stood as I did, containing in its heart the same treasure in an altered world,—altered in every respect, but that I was an altered man ; I mean, that I had recommenced my pilgrimage, in a way that she would have approved. I no longer refused to

speaking of her, at least to a man whose mind it is an honour to be unreserved with, like yours;" (for I must repeat what he said on that head, observed Wren, out of justice to himself,) "and when I lay my head at night on my pillow, I please myself with thinking, that I am so much the nearer heaven,—not doubtfully as before, when I doubted the very existence of happiness,—but with the decent confidence, which in all cases seems the reward of exertion."

Sir Christopher admitted Mr Levens to his friendship; and thirteen years afterwards, at the age of seventy-four, saw his earthly remains deposited by the side of her, the companionship of whose memory, notwithstanding the living death it had caused him in the interval, seemed to have gifted him, in his old age, with the hopefulness and activity of youth.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER the fire, a monument was set up, with a great lie upon it; to wit, that the disaster had been caused by the Papists. At least it was a great assumption, and unproved. There was, however, as great a truth in the sculpture; namely, the dissatisfaction in his Majesty's countenance; and the priests and jesuits were banished, equally to his discontent. However, Miss Stewart let him present her with a pair of stockings.

Before the year was out, the talk was stronger than ever, that this lady was to carry everything before her, and be queen. In the course of the new *Annus Mirabilis*, it turned out, that she preferred carrying a little Earl before her, for she married the Duke of Richmond. "Without speaking a word to any one," said Friar Talbot, "she bade adieu to the court." The King took it greatly to heart, thinking himself not only robbed,

but cheated. To say the truth, he was in a most unsophisticate rage, and inclined to quarrel with all of us. Clarendon suffered the most: nay, some think, that ultimately he was the only one that suffered at all; for the Duke of Richmond and the King were observed, not long after, to be as loving over their wine, as if nothing had happened. The Chancellor had been going down a long time; but this accident precipitated him. Charles thought him at the bottom of it, which was likely enough; though he protested, that he knew no more of it than his Majesty. Be this as it may, his enemies seized the opportunity, and down he went. His subsequent flight is well known. I saw him when he came to give up the seals. Castlemain came in her undress into the balcony, to see him return; and did not scruple, in his hearing, to laugh and make merry on his gout. Arlington and Bab May were at her side. The old man looked up, his face turning to its wonted colour, and said, (I thought with great dignity,) "Madam, you will be old yourself."

I was told afterwards, that her Ladyship said, though not loud enough for him to hear, "She might be as old as any one else, but that she should take care not to make a brute of herself with eating; nor should she tell a parcel of lies with a pious face."

Her triumph at that period was complete ; her rival was got rid of ; her enemy lost his place ; and her cousin and rival favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, after risking his head, (at least he would have done so under any other prince,) was restored to favour through her intervention. Nevertheless, in the course of a few weeks, I saw her at the play, looking as melancholy as a cat, (for she could never hide her feelings,) because the King was looking at Moll Davis. Moll had just been dancing a saraband, and her Ladyship thought, that the saraband being over, the King might as well look another way. Somebody had brought her word, that Miss Davis had a fine coach waiting for her at the play-house-door, and that everybody took off their hats when she came out of it.

The vagaries of the Duke of Buckingham had come to their crisis that year. Having accustomed himself to every indulgence that the human mind can think of, he had acquired the will of a sovereign without the power ; and a foolish fellow, with whom he dabbled in astrology, persuaded him that the discontents against Charles might raise him to the throne. My old friend, Mr Braythwaite, who had a kinsman in his service, and who, under the guise of being his spy, turned out to be a spy upon his Grace, shewed his usual generosity towards the persons he condescended to cheat. He betrayed

him in so handsome a manner to the King, that his Majesty saw how the matter stood at once, and what a great baby he had about him, in the person of this witty Duke. Charles thought it high time, however, to put an end to absurdities, which might force him to cut off the head of his old acquaintance; not to mention, that in some unfortunate astrological moment, the two sovereigns, the real and the pretended, might be put into an awkward position before the public, and be compelled, in self-defence, to expose the respective habits that led the one to be so forgiving, and the other so presumptuous.

For years past, Buckingham had been in the habit of talking in a very lax manner of Charles. The King had often reproached him with it; but with the acuteness and knowledge of mankind that never forsook him, even when he was most playing the fool, his Grace used partly to deny it, and partly to defend himself on the plea, that the more he loved the King, the more impatient he grew sometimes when his Majesty was unkind to him; for none, he said, spoke so ill of one another in their passion, as those who were the most loving out of it. They could least bear the unkindness that led to the enormity. If the King readily admitted the excuse, the Duke was all gratitude and agreeableness: if he hesitated, some impudent

allusion was made to the quarrels of royal friends, or their mistresses ; always, however, in a tone of unwilling desperation, and of an impatience to be forgiven and made penitent. At all events, the King was sure to forgive, if for no reason but indolence, and a wish not to disturb his supper. Buckingham then seized the opportunity of saying a world of pleasant and adoring things ; and it was noticed, that the good-humoured prince was never so gay, either with him or Castlemain, as after a quarrel. Times altered in that respect at last.

Castlemain and Buckingham were far from being always good friends. There was not such bitter enmity between them, as was supposed. They cared too little for one another, and were too fond of their ease and gaiety. But there had been little love between them from childhood. They were nearly related enough to put into their quarrels something of the exacting injustice of ties without affection. Buckingham, in right of his father, thought himself hereditary favourite of the monarchy ; and Castlemain thought, with some justice, that she was the monarchy itself. He tried to get a power over her, of a new and tenderer sort ; but great as was the licence which she allowed herself, and small the merits to which she could be indulgent, nobody was more peremptory than her Ladyship in vindicating the dignity of disinclina-

tion. Buckingham got hold of some of her letters. She laughed at him. He got hold of some of Charles's, and the King was frightened.

Nothing convinced Buckingham with more certainty that the King was finally resolved to punish him for his delinquencies, than the fact of his Majesty's having got over his fear of the publication of these letters. He began to think, that the King had discovered some of his own, of a nature still more alarming; and this was true. Buckingham could distress the King—could make him ridiculous—perhaps could seriously endanger his interest; but the King had that in his possession, which would have made the Duke unable to exist in the country. In the midst of his cantings with the Puritans, his laughter with the republican wits, his tampering with the astrologers, and his encouragements (more serious than all) of a disaffected body of seamen, ill paid, and ready to invade the King's kitchen for hunger—(for, with all the naval splendour of this reign, and the King's real turn for its encouragement, it was the old seamen of Cromwell that gained us our victories, while they received nothing from us but praise and bad pay)—the discovery of the correspondence alluded to, fell upon the Duke like a clap of thunder. It was followed by an order for his arrest. He immediately made the most submissive protesta-

tions in writing ; but as he was horribly frightened, and attempted to bargain for a security, which the King refused to grant, our astrological monarch was forced to hide himself for months, being absolutely so much reduced at last for want of a corner, that he was fain to turn to account his old practice of sleeping by day, which he would do in the obscurest lodgings, and then wander forth by night to seek another. At length, this course of life appearing but a sorry kind of lingering death to a personage of his Grace's habits, and the King affording him some glimpses of reconciliation, he surrendered himself, and was taken to the Tower, earnestly entreating, though in vain, that he might first be admitted to his Majesty's presence. He knew, that if he had but five minutes' talk with him, it was all over with his indignation. He might have made himself easy, however, if he could. The moment of his surrender was the signal for Charles to indulge his easy disposition. A shew was made of an examination ; letters of little importance were brought forward, of which Buckingham was enabled to make light. His Grace clasped his Majesty's knees ; Castlemain permitted him to kiss her hand ; and, instead of going to the scaffold, his Grace took his seat at the council. Next evening, he was making the

King die at the play, with mimicing old Lady Danvers, who sat opposite.

I had most of these particulars from my worthy friend before mentioned, Mr Braythwaite, who now maketh his re-appearance on the *tapis*, and who had a great hand in settling more than one history recorded in these pages. I can talk more comfortably of that period now, than I could have done at the time; but the interval still makes such an impression on my memory, in spite of the animal spirits with which I got through it, that I willingly say nothing of the greater troubles of Lady Vavasour. It was now two years and upwards, since we had heard no tidings of our beloved friend. The Countess still continued abroad. I paid her a visit in the autumn of sixty-seven, and had the pleasure of a week's almost incessant talk with dear Ellen, who was lovelier than ever, and made me very impatient to see the Duke of Ormond. Next year, his Grace came into England. But as this year was of great importance to us all, I shall commence it with a new chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

BUCKINGHAM, on the strength of his new virtue and his old sins, kept a most flowing Christmas at Wallingford House. I had observed, for a long time, that he seemed to know the reasons I had for disliking him; for though always friendly and affable, much more so indeed than my countenance gave him encouragement to be, he continued, as much as he could, to avoid both speaking to me and seeing me. However, he included me in a select entertainment which he announced for January, and invited me in person, after the following style:—


“How is it, my dear Sir Ralph, I never see you now? All the world is to be happy, now that the King is his own master; and old friends must needs come together, if none else. You must sup with me to-morrow in the old room. There will be Buckhurst, and Etherege, and Rochester, and

St Andrew, whom you desired to know, and Dryden, who promises to replace the loss of Mr Cowley."

There is something in the penitential endeavours of a man of this sort, or the appearance of them, which makes one consent to his wishes, out of the very shame of having the advantage of him. I endeavoured to look pleased, as indeed I could not help being with some of the names.

"Your Grace's bill of fare is, as usual, of the most attractive description."—"And you the same good fellow, as of old," returned he, with the quickness of lightning. "Well, Ralph, I shall expect you,"—hastening away, as if somebody called him; and then Lord Shaftesbury and others coming by, he slackened his departure, as if on purpose to do me honour, making me a bow betwixt old familiarity and high regard. He then said aloud, with all his gracefulness, "You will find the wit worth your tasting."

Upon the whole, I did not like to accept this invitation, but I comforted myself with thinking of the pleasure I should receive from the company of Etherege and Dryden. However, the meeting did not take place; for on the day appointed, the famous duel occurred between the Duke penitent and the husband of that bugle-eyed devil, Lady Shrewsbury, who is said to have held the Duke's



horse in the disguise of a page, while he ran the poor man through the body. Something worse was told of their behaviour afterwards; which I believe also. He or she would do anything for a variety. She came with him one night into the pit of the King's theatre in boy's clothes, and made love to an orange-girl. She had got a wig on, of a different colour from her own hair, and pretended not to know anybody; but she was recognised. People thought this was carrying a joke too far.

Buckingham told me he should appoint a new day for the party; but he never did. I was glad of it. I got acquainted with Mr Dryden afterwards in a much pleasanter manner, in his own sphere, among the wits and others, in Russell-street. I have dined with several of them at great tables, where they never appeared to advantage. Either the host did not know how to treat them; or they were too anxious to shine; or they affected an indifference to their value, and wished to be confounded with fine gentlemen; or there were too many of them together, and so they were afraid to speak, lest another should excel; or one of the lowest of their fraternity was present, who was most welcome on that account, and gave himself airs; or something else was sure to occur, which made them uneasy, and shewed them to a disadvantage, both as wits and gentlemen. If the great

man was a wit himself, he could not forget that he was a lord; if he was not a wit, he talked as much as if he was, or shewed his guests off like a parcel of wild fowl; and in neither case could he forget his superiority, or enable them comfortably to forget theirs. Sir Philip said there was a natural enmity between wits and lords, and that some day they would find it out. I mentioned several lords who were wits themselves, and of the first order. "We consider them so now," said he, "but the next age will put the Misters before them. I allow the wit you speak of; but if wit and title meet in the same person, the two things are then at enmity with each other. The one is something by itself, the other is nothing; and so there is a natural hostility between them, even in the same person; just as there is between a man's truth and his falsehood. Besides, the titled wit can never be sure how much homage you pay to his title instead of his wit; and as he does not chuse to miss it on either account, his followers will never be sure of him. He is not sure of himself."

These observations were remarkably exemplified in the instances of Dryden, and Rochester, and Mulgrave, and Buckingham himself. Dryden has since been acknowledged to be the greatest man of them all: yet he was alternately courted and tram-

pled upon by all three ; and surely nothing could have been louder and more contemptuous than their laughter, had anybody attempted to persuade them that they could not write better, if they set their wits to it. Mulgrave * thinks to this day, that nothing but a princely love of his ease hinders him from being the greatest author in Europe. I remember Rochester's telling me, that there was more wit in the world than I suspected ; and that our known authors would not be the first on the list, if every nobleman chose to write that could. I said, I did not believe it ; for that genius of a high order was a thing irrepressible, and would have its way, which I said was his own case. I did not add that he would have shewn himself a still higher genius than he was, if his powers had been in proportion. How many men of rank enjoy a reputation for wit, till they write ; and what poor hands they turn out ! A man indeed may be wittier *viva voce*, than on paper ; and it is not impossible that a great genius may live among us, unknown even to himself, for want of something to fetch him out. But in the one case, the wit is most likely of a nature not good enough to last, or it would instinctively take a shape fit for duration ; and in the other, the modesty must be equal to the

* Sheffield, afterwards Duke of Buckinghamshire.—*Edit.*

genius, which it probably never is but in the very highest and rarest cases. Above all, there is no period during which too low an estimate of existing wit is so little likely to be made, as when authorship is in fashion. The probability is, that wit becoming a sort of cant, and everybody pretending to it, and using one another's phrases, the estimate will be a great deal too high, and fops take themselves for wits, who speak as they dress, after the patterns that are furnished them.

Notwithstanding his duel with Lord Shrewsbury, Buckingham was now all for peace and harmony. He complained of the Earl himself, for insisting upon fighting him; alleging that he was a man of "an unchristian spirit," (I suppose for not returning good for evil). He artfully endeavoured to give a new turn to the disinclination which he had shewn on former occasions to encounters of that sort, and would have us believe that it arose from anything but want of spirit or skill. Indeed, in the present instance, he had shewn no deficiency in either. The encouragements of his christian mistress appear to have supplied him with the one; and of the other, a lamentable proof was given, not only by the passage of his sword through the Earl's body, but by the death of the poor man a few weeks afterwards. Buckingham was ostentatious of his regret; but what, said he, could he do?

The man sought his life, purely because he was not happy with the Countess, nor would let any one else be so : and as to the lady, he was now, " in common decency," bound to take care of her. So, in common decency, he carried her into all companies that would admit her, which were more numerous than they would be now. I saw her one day talking with blushing Lady Ossory, and next with poor Nell, whom I thought almost as much polluted by the contact as the chaste Emilia. Ossory did not like it ; but the King had contrived to bring the parties together. His Majesty had taken up the same text as his favourite, everywhere preaching peace and kindness, and bringing together the most discordant natures. Since Clarendon was got rid of, and the King had paid a visit to the Duchess of Richmond, there was to be no more quarrelling, and no more business. Clifford and Arlington were to keep the latter out of sight, assisted by Lauderdale and Shaftesbury ; and Buckingham was to see that they did so. The King walked about, chatted, played at bowls, at tennis, at duck-feeding, &c. ; and in the evening, there were cards and music, or the theatre. On Tuesday, walking about, playing at tennis, or at bowls ; in the evening, cards, theatre, or music : and so on to the end of the chapter : with racing, boating, and coursing, in due season ; for his Majesty did not

value the chase, like his brother. It is to be understood, that a supper, with a select party, usually consisting of the same persons, invariably closed the evening; and though the pleasures above mentioned constituted the ostensible business of life, a hundred streams of gallantry ran under it all, crossing each other in a thousand directions; now making a pretty murmur, now dashing about with fury; now hiding in the shades, and now sparkling with triumphant bosom in the daylight. If all the world had been as well off, or had had as little concern in the matter as the King seemed to think he had; or if the parties themselves had entertained a better opinion of one another, and not confounded loving and being loved, with cheating and being cheated, the case might have approximated a little more to that golden age, which novices and the tailors thought it. But the King, though nobody denied him anything but money, got the hardest lines in his face of any man in his kingdom; and my Lady Castlemain, though nobody denied her anything but belief, flew into transports of grief and passion, which made the ears of the anti-chambers tingle. How different from the person I once knew her! That is to say, how ignorant I was at that time, and how much disagreeable knowledge I had acquired!

There was one day in particular, which I shall

never forget, because it forced me somehow to have a different opinion of her and the King for ever afterwards. The marvels of that day began at noon, with a great crash in the Blue Parlour. It was the breakfast table, which her Ladyship kicked over. Presently after, we heard the doors thrown open, one after the other, and then her divine voice, lifting itself up as loudly as possible, and threatening to fire his Majesty's house, and dash out the brains of his little dukes! We all stood aghast: I mean, Harry Killigrew, Buckhurst, and I, who were talking in the anti-chamber. The door opens, and his Majesty puts out his face, very pale, "Pr'ythee, Buckhurst," said he, "step this way." Buckhurst went, stopped a full hour, and returned shrugging his shoulders. He found her, beating a tattoo with her foot, and glowing like a devil. Buckhurst did not say what passed, but there was a draft next day on the privy purse for thirty thousand pounds, and that same evening his Majesty got drunker than ever I saw him. He was very irritable till he got to his second bottle, which I had never known him before; damned a score of people by name, particularly Monk, who, he said, would have been the greatest scoundrel in England, if he had not been the greatest fool; and above all, damned "virtue," which in the head of the church was thought a

little scandalous. He said he had heard a great deal about virtue, but that "he would be d—d if he ever met with it in the whole course of his life, beginning with the swearing martyr, who loved a girl as well as anybody, and ending with Bridgeman, who was a cowardly impostor." The "swearing martyr" was his father! Clifford, who had shewn symptoms of uneasiness ever since his Majesty began in this strain, got up to lead us away at the latter part of it; but the King would not suffer it. He swore he meant nothing but to amuse us; and his charity returned with such excess at bottle the third, that the Duke of York coming in nearly as drunk as he, and falling on his knees (for they had quarrelled, and not spoken for a month) our gracious Sovereign fell down upon his own; and so they lugged and slobbered one another, while Bab May shed tears of delight! The King, however, I must say, looked more owlsh than affectionate during the operation.

Next day I lamented this scene to Buckhurst. "The worst of it is," said Buckhurst, "that he has no heart." This startled me. "No heart!" cried I. "Not a jot," exclaimed Buckhurst: "you would have discovered it, as I have done, had you not fancied yourself obliged by him. I know more than one honest man who has ruined

himself in his service, and could never get a penny out of him, though he has staked thousands at night for months together. Yesterday I ventured to be importunate for one of these men; and he had the face to ask me, ‘Why the man had been such a fool as to ruin himself for another?’ There was no answering this, so I bowed and despised him.” From the day I had this conversation with Buckhurst, I found myself compelled to be much of his opinion. And yet I have heard my Lord Dorset * find excuses for him.

In the midst of these pleasant occurrences, the Duke of Ormond came over from his Irish government, and made a wonderful sensation among us. The first time I saw him was under circumstances too curious to be omitted. The King had been told of a beautiful country girl who brought flowers to market, and was said to have a singular resemblance to Lady Castlemain. It happened in April, that there was a run of fine weather, and his Majesty resolved to cross over one morning from the Mall to the street through which the girl passed, and judge of the likeness for himself. News of his intention was brought to Castlemain, who resolved to go and judge too, especially as Harry Jermyn had expressed his admiration of that union

* Buckhurst himself, under his older title.—*Edit.*

of rusticity with grace for which the girl was said to be remarkable. Her Ladyship expected that Harry would be among the judges; which, as she had a regard for him at that time, she thought might bring him out in the morning a little too early. Accordingly, in her decided way, she made no more ado, but got a basket, dressed herself in the fashion of a market-woman, and pretending to have come with her flowers, took her way up the street in question, as if returning home. As the devil would have it, she saw before her the King, Shepherd, Harry Jermyn, and myself, the first evidently without his star, as the passengers took no notice of him; and the girl at that minute passing her from behind, the Countess joined her, under pretence of asking the protection of her company, "as she was a new hand at the trade." The girl, who resembled her still more than was suspected, did not seem to relish her acquaintance. She made various perplexing enquiries, as to who she was, and what person employed her; and the Countess pretending to be as deaf as a post, and returning the most impossible answers, the jealousy of the other was increased to a pitch of dislike, that made her glow like a turkey-cock; so that what with indignation on one side, and alarm on the other, they were in a fine flustered condition when they came by the royal party.

“Two of them!” cried Shepherd, “by all that’s rosy! Stop, my dear, we’ll buy your cheeks of you, as you’ve sold your flowers.” Jermyn, who pronounced the likeness amazing, began to make one of his politer speeches to the girl, and the King was bidding her not to be frightened, when she cried out, “Shatn’t then, shatn’t, you nasty black twoad. Ought to be shamed, so t’ought, to talk o’ thick theare fashion to poor maidens.” Her voice suddenly dropped as Charles put a guinea in her hand; but as she continued sullen, and made as little shew of returning his love as his money, he was about to whisper her companion, when Jermyn drew him off. His Majesty looked more than disconcerted; for some apprentice boys, who had stopped their work to look on, now broke out into exclamations of astonishment at the likeness of “the sisters.” “What, are there two of you? What’s your name, little double-devil?” We should have succeeded in getting through this trouble, as the fellows could not leave their doors, had it not been for a lame sailor, who thrust himself among us. “For the lord’s sake, noble captains, one penny for charity; noble commander, cast your eye on the remains of my precious limb,” (shewing a stump in a dangling sleeve):—“a splinter, your honours, on the glorious 3rd of June; paid before my time and never after

it, as God's my judge; not a stiver to put in a pretty girl's placket. Pray, my Lady Duchess (for you're too handsome to be an orange-wench) one kiss of your cherry lips to bless the gentlemen's money!" While the fellow was uttering this and a great deal more of his jargon, he so thrust his sleeve in our faces with one arm, and his hat among us with the other, persisting in spite of the money we threw in it, and contriving to implicate us with the two women, that a crowd assembled. "A Duchess! A Duchess!" cried some: "Egad, they say she gave him a guinea!" Charles now began to be alarmed. Several men had got hold of Castlemain, and were forcibly looking in her face, when I twisted her away, and pushed her into a door by a shop. "'Tis a court-lady," said one: "a fine madam, to be masking it at this time of a morning!" "No, no!" said I, seeing the King much distressed, and resolved at all events to divert the attention of the crowd, who seemed as if they would lay regular siege to the house, "'tis a discarded servant of the Queen's, who has recognised his Majesty, and was plaguing him." I said this aloud, that he might hear me, and added, taking off my hat, "I know the King well enough; I have followed him in his morning's walk from the Mall." All hats were off in a moment, accompanied with exclamations of "The King! God

bless him!" and "God bless your Majesty!" The King rallied his looks immediately, and congratulated his loyal subjects on the fine weather which had led him among them. Jermyn and Shepherd put on their court looks, drawing up on either side of him, like the lion and unicorn; and we were all about to move on, longing for a short cut back to St James's, when, as the devil would have it, there came a grand equipage by us, with six or eight horses, and running footmen.

"'Tis Ormond," said the lame sailor to me in a whisper, whom I now recognised for the Earl of Rochester: "I leave you in good hands." So saying, his Lordship, who had earned a wager he laid overnight, vanished among the crowd; and I collected myself as well as I could for this new surprise.

"'Tis Ormond, sure enough," said the King to Shepherd, in a tone of exceeding vexation: "he has seen the girls and the mob, but nothing will stop him. He'll make the show complete, out of his d—d sense of propriety."

It may be imagined with what eagerness I looked at the coach. It stopped as the Duke bowed from the inside; and the door being opened, out stepped his Grace, and stood with his hat in the air, to let us pass in due form. The King, partly not knowing what to do, but always unable

to see the Duke without manifesting his respect for him, graciously beckoned him to the pavement, and after a few phrases of welcome, they parted in high form ; the Lord Lieutenant not even glancing a look at the rest of us ; and his Majesty, between outward smiles, and internal cursing, puckering his face as if he had met the east wind, and blushing like a black dog.

As I knew that Ormond would lose no time in waiting formally upon the King, I waited till he had done so, and then hastened to be introduced to him. His Grace had already made his enquiries, and received me with a cordiality I should hardly have expected from one of his stately manners, notwithstanding what Sir Philip had said of him. His manners, indeed, when he was pleased, would have been pronounced a great deal more cordial than stately, though he was always highly the nobleman. I could not but think, however, that there was a good deal of pride at the heart of them, and that he never quite got rid of an air of condescension. I took notice that he blushed when he saw me. One of the first points on which he entered, was the antiquity of my family ; and the satisfaction he expressed at it, leading us into a new fervour on both sides, during which I said something of the honour done me by his alliance ; he blushed again, and said, with a kind of

pang in the utterance, "The honour, in this instance, is done to the young lady." I was piqued at his not calling her his daughter. I was less satisfied on my side, than he was on his. I took her part against him, let her mother, thought I, be who she might; and I felt at that moment as if I would fain have been his son, and have seen her a parson's daughter, on purpose that I might have married her, and vexed this unfatherly pride.

Some praises of her, though forced from him by mine, restored him a little to my good graces; and the pardon was complete when he proceeded to tell me, that he had news of Sir Philip, and that he was safe and well! I felt as if I could have jumped up and embraced him. He was much pleased at the enthusiasm I expressed.

"To tell you the truth," said he smiling, "I formed a higher opinion from one ardent word written of you by that excellent young man, than from all the testimonies of the ladies, however much I respect both their testimonies and themselves."

"And *not* to tell you the truth," thought I, "I think you might treat them as well as my friend would have done, and not make such invidious distinctions. 'Ardent word' is excellent: but 'excellent young man,' in your mouth, would tell against him, if I did not know him as well as I do."

These impressions must have been strong, for they passed through my mind with the rapidity of lightning. I forgot them, when his Grace proceeded to enter into particulars concerning my friend. A vessel bound to England from the Canaries had gone expressly out of its way, up the Irish Channel, to give a letter to the Duke from Sir Philip, which contained an account of all which my friend himself knew of the adventure. It contained remembrances for myself, and an announcement of something he had for me which he hoped I should consider better than a dozen letters. Sir Philip, it seems, had scarcely quitted the ship at the Nore, which he did at twilight, the instant he found that the Duke of York was not going to sea again, when he was seized by a set of fellows whom he took for a press-gang. In the surprise of the moment, he was gagged, pinioned, and carried in a boat to a schooner, which without delay set sail down the Channel, the Captain having secured him below.

He had not been in this state twenty-four hours. when, after exhausting in vain every conjecture respecting his seizure (for he soon perceived that he was not pressed) he cast his eyes upon a packet of songs and gazettes, such as captains of vessels take with them to sea. He eagerly opened it, both to occupy his thoughts, and to see if the

court news could furnish him with any means of guessing how matters went on at Mickleham. The first one he entered upon contained an account of the presentation at court of "Mr Dalton's bride, the charming Countess of Vavasour, at which almost all the great lords were present, except the Duke of Buckingham." The paper fell from his hands. He said, that in the extremity of an anguish too great for his reason, he felt relieved at the thought of being out of the way of Dalton, and of all the world. The ocean seemed bearing him to some distant island, fit to conceal him for ever; and he almost looked upon his misfortune as a blessing of Providence. Among the songs and fugitive pieces, were some verses addressed to the "worthy and ingenious Mr Dalton, on his marriage," and an epithalamium with the signature of Dryden.

I stared at the Duke of Ormond, overcome with amazement.

"You see how it was done?" said Ormond.

"I do not remember," said I, "any talk of such things in a Gazette."

"Surely not," cried the Duke; "it was forged."

"Forged!"

"Yes; Gazette, epithalamium, and all. The packet was laid in the cabin on purpose, the

number of the Gazette forged, and the verses too.* Buckingham can write as well as Dryden, when malice inspires him."

"Your Grace believes then—"

"I beg your pardon," said Ormond, who liked a regular official narrative: "you shall hear."

His Grace proceeded to inform me of particulars, which together with the journal I saw afterwards, supplied me with the retrospect which is here concentrated.

Soon perceiving that he was not pressed, and that he was kept from intercourse with the men, Sir Philip so conducted himself, that he was not only relieved from his bonds, but the Captain, from being surly and disposed to abuse, picked his way into a kind of shame-faced familiarity, declaring there must have been "some mistake." This familiarity degenerated into one of a grosser sort, in which the man undertook to jest with him on his quiet, and to pretend that the situation was one that he liked. Sir Philip suppressed his vexation, and talking further with the man, so wrought upon him, with that admi-

* The modern reader will not be surprised at this trick, when he recollects the forgery of a French newspaper in our own times, to serve a purpose on 'Change.—*Edm.*

nable way that he had, of fetching out every one's understanding, and putting the human being up to the best height of which it was capable, that he was served throughout the rest of the voyage with as much respect and kindness as seemed possible, though he could never get an explanation. He was suffered to come on deck, on promise of his not speaking to the men out of the Captain's hearing, and of returning below at the least intimation of a request to that purpose. The request was soon made; and for the latter half of the voyage he was begged to content himself below, the captain plainly avowing that his men were disposed to be riotous, and that they gave him a great deal of trouble. One day he came down, and confessed that he was almost inclined to ask his prisoner to talk with them; for which purpose he owned, what the gentleman, he said, must have known without his telling him; namely, that the plea of a "mistake," was all nothing, and that he had been trepanned on board to suit the views of that "damned villain;" whose name he would nevertheless not disclose. At the same time, though with a request that he would say nothing of what he had owned, he made a formal introduction of his mate; a smooth rascal, (Sir Philip said,) the greatest liar he ever met with, and as vain as if all the wonderful things he told

of himself were true. With this man, whose natural understanding was inferior to that of the Captain's, but who had an address which rendered certain designs he entertained on the vessel very dangerous, if it had not been for his lying, he had more trouble than with the others. Yet even he did not remain uninfluenced; and the Captain said, at the conclusion of the voyage, that for aught he knew, his prisoner had been the salvation of the vessel.

I know well how Sir Philip had managed all this. I had heard him talk with captains and with common sailors; and the impression he made upon all persons was the same, if he entered with any interest into their concerns. Great suffering had combined with his natural capacity to render him the most unassuming as well as intelligent of men: he really was what he seemed,—a man who saw beyond the claims of wit and even virtue. (considered as a thing formal,) and valued the common capabilities of humanity above every other consideration. He said he had been forced to behold so many strange faces of thought, and to feel so strongly and so weakly in his own nature, what the impulses were that led persons of less reflection into the most blameable actions, that if nothing else would have induced him to make common cause with man-

kind, and set up no claims or merits but what all might possess, self-love would have done it. Egotism itself had ended in making him no egotist. He saw himself and all mankind alternately in each other; and said he could have ended in being a rascal, out of sheer impartiality, if he believed rascality itself to be what it is supposed, or anything else (in clever men) but a spleen and a stopping short, out of a physical impatience and want of refinement. He had a singular notion, which some would have mistaken for a concession to the doctrine of original sin; that a great deal of our virtue and vice was born with us, interwoven with our very frames, and modified by their greater or less coarseness, or the nature of our blood: but then he had causes for it, founded in other matters modified by laws and education; and he thought very little of the few thousands of years of which we know anything, and to which that "experience" is confined, which is used as such an argument against human change. He spread out a sheet of paper one day, as I was talking with him in the lieutenant's cabin, made a dot on it with his pen, and said, "*That* is the experience of mankind." "The white then," said I, "is our inexperience—is time past or future, or what we don't know?" "No," returned he, "if all the paper in the world were put together, the

white would not be enough for the inexperience, and yet the dot would be the true representation of the other. *All space* is the white; and the dot is all history.”—“Sir Philip,” said Lord Dorset, one day, “thinks gigantically. Sheffield and others seem profound thinkers, and really do say very clever things; but they hav’nt the heart, even if they had the will, to entertain a good opinion of human nature, and to hope the best of it. They fancy it would lower their pretensions. Sir Philip thinks of himself, neither as high nor low, but as a fellow creature, ready to take all chances with humanity. I love him. I agree with him over the wine, and differ with him next morning: but that is my fault, not his.” His Lordship then made use of the following splendid image, which he called a bounce of Irish inspiration generated between his own conceits and my friend’s enthusiasm. “If thought were light, and our planet visible by it, and space were time, the next ages would see us coming by a little ray, made up of such minds as Sir Philip Herne’s.” “Such a man,” said Lady Arlington, “is too great to love. I only wonder Lady Vavasour changed her mind about him.”—I told her how the servants and children loved him, and how he would romp and laugh like a child by the hour. She said she should be afraid of him. “It was like the laugh-

ter of a goblin."—I related what old Lady M. said, in her excessive style; "that they might call Sir Philip an angel if they pleased, but that he had the art of saying more devilish impudent things, with a tender face, when he was but a lad, than all the court put together." "The murder's out;" said the fair Arlington, "there is nothing like tenderness for your meeting of extremes."

To return to my narrative. On coming in sight of the Canaries, where the Captain said he should rid himself of the worst part of his crew, he told Sir Philip, after the first bout of drinking which he had indulged in since he left England, that all which he had said during the voyage appeared to him as a dream; that if it had not been for Tom Vickers, and Leonard, and the Little Devil, and his wife and children, perhaps he might have had some thoughts of trying his hand at a better trade; but how stood the case? Life was life, and some were sharks, and some were gudgeons; and gudgeons were sharks after their fashion. However, he (Sir Philip) was a noble gentleman, who knew how to make allowances, and scorned to say he had no diamonds; and he had shewn his gratitude to him by landing him at the Canaries, instead of taking him all the way to Jamaica, which was the thing he ought to have

done by his bond. He named no names, and he looked to the gentleman's making "no ungenteeled use of no hints." He secured my promise to that effect, (said Sir Philip,) making me give my solemn promise that I would refer to some other authority for my suspicions. "It will be easy to find it," said the man, "when you set to work; but mark what I say: Buck or Buccaneer—hit the Buck, and the blood will follow. If I save these diamonds from drink and the Little Devil, mayhap I may see Old England no more; if they go the way of all flesh, why I've said nothing that the King could hang me for, and if he could, mayhap I wouldn't let him. That's bold, isn't it? But a secret's a secret. I was told you were the damndest scoundrel that ever was. I did not much believe it; that's as it happens; but it helps one to do an ugly job the better. How stands the case? You are the heartiest cock of a saint I ever came nigh; talk, d—nme, like an angel, and yet are an honest fellow; make one, somehow, rational, like, without being drunk. So mind—Buck or Buccaneer—hit the Buck, and—you know the rest:—Sangué, as the Portuguese says. I hate to name names; but you're enough to corrupt a saint. 'Twas M'Ginnis that smoked him. The Major—did I say the Major?—well, let it pass, for they say he's a Colonel:—well;—he called out

of the cliff at Scarborough one day, like the damned son of — thunder as he is, as if he had us all under hatches, instead of our being in danger of scudding away without him, for the officers you see were coming, and they'd have found us in a pretty rig: says M'Ginnis, who was a bit of a cousin on the wrong side of the blanket, though he didn't care to let Big-chops see that he knew him,—says M'Ginnis, says he, 'The voice of my brothers'—eh—you twig me—'crieth from the ground.' I name no names; but Lord! you might read it in his looks. Oh, if you had but the sending of him to the Plantations, how happy should I be to serve you! D——nme if I'd take any of his moidores in part payment for accommodation,—for he's a hell of a tongue either way, that's certain, though he does not talk as you do. Oh! you have it out and out, in diamonds as well as gab: so here you are at the Canaries, and part-payment may see you, for aught I care, in the twinkling of a cutlass."

I transcribe the detail of this jargon from the packet which afterwards reached me. Sir Philip, for obvious reasons, had been as minute as possible in his account both to the Duke and myself, but it was not to be expected that his Grace should relate it all. I was surprised to hear him repeat as much of it as he did; but besides the wine we

had been taking, I found afterwards that notwithstanding his dignity, and the nickname of "Charley's Schoolmaster," which Buckingham had given him, he was not without something of the universality of a soldier, and could talk of many things which I had not expected out of his normal lips. To be sure, these were all after-dinner occasions, and next day I thought he did not much like to remember them.

The moment he uttered the word Buck, a light flashed upon me ; but I was puzzled, as Sir Philip was, with the allusions to the other word.

"Your Grace," said I, interrupting him, "suspects as I do, from the look you give me."

"I do not suspect," said Ormond, "I am sure. Nor had Sir Philip any doubts of Buckingham, though he was mystified with the rest. The moment I heard of our friend's disappearance, I recollected Buckingham's visits to Lady Vavasour, and knew that he was at the bottom of it. I will tell you what made me certain. Much as you know of this unworthy nobleman, twice as much could be told of him. You never heard of the offer he made about the Queen not long ago, when his Majesty was so infatuated with this insipid Duchess of Richmond?"

"I never did. I remember the King's drawing himself up in a remarkable manner, after they had

whispered together, and his bidding the Duke go and recollect himself behind the Queen's chair, where Buckingham obsequiously waited the remainder of the evening; but we did not know what to make of it."

"He offered to carry her off to the Plantations!"

"Is it possible?"

"Oh, anything is possible with a Buckingham, or must be thought to be so."

"But what was he to say to her? How could he manage it? How could it have been hushed up?"

"The questions are natural. Everybody in the secret has asked them, but himself! But how are we to look for reason in a shatter-brain? Buckingham trusted to his wit, to get him out of the scrape. It will get him to the block some day."

"I cannot conceive what step he would have taken after his first. Why, every prince in Europe would demand an account of it."

"Every prince in Europe!" cried the Duke in some heat; "every prince in Europe would be glad to see the court of England go mad. They like, I believe, to be bullied by a plebeian government. At least, they hate us for having ousted the man that frightened them; and

it is a stupid maxim among them, as they will see some day, that the folly of one court is the wisdom of another. Perhaps that impudent woman Lady Shrewsbury was at the bottom of it. If his Majesty had consented to see his wife carried off by a privateer, he would have found some excuse for marrying Miss Stewart; and then Buckingham would have divorced his wife, and married my Lord's; and so they would all have got married, and drunk, and damned together.—God forgive a loyal subject for saying so," added Ormond, recollecting himself, "but what one hears every day makes the blood fly up into one's cheeks, and forces oaths out of one's mouth."

His Grace fell into some passionate remarks on Buckingham's late duel, the new amours with actresses, &c. but suddenly checked himself, looking at me in a hard and dry manner, which I treated with a nonchalance that I thought became me.

"But what does your Grace conceive," said I, "is meant by the allusion of this privateer, buccaneer, or whatever he was, to blood or bloodshed? Blood would seem to be a name. Then Major or Colonel? There is a man I have long suspected; but his name is Sandford. I take him to be the same man who calls himself Dalton; and from what is known of Dalton's attempt on Lady Vava-

sour, there can be little doubt that he is concerned in this outrage on the man she loved. He probably saw that she still loved him, and that Sir Philip's return would be the ruin of his imposture; and so resolved to keep him out of the way. But then Buckingham is implicated? How is that? Was the pretended feud between him and Dalton only a league in disguise? and is Dalton, and Sandford, and the sanguinary unknown (whatever his name is) one and the same person?"

"Blood is the person," said Ormond: "Blood is his name, and blood is his nature. Sandford, the name under which you seem to have known him, was his hiding name, when he fled from the laws in Ireland. You have heard the particulars of the attempt on Lady Vavasour, and the fortunate arrival of Mr O'Rourke. O'Rourke knew him the moment he heard him speak. I will tell you the man's history in a few words. Dick Talbot says he is the son of a blacksmith, and I believe it; for though Dick is a liar, I remember the first time I saw this Blood, which was in the year 40, just before I was commander-in-chief; in the absence of my Lord Strafford, he was sent to me with a message from Sir Edward Trevor, in which he conducted himself with so much impertinence, that I was fain to express a hope that Sir

Edward would send me a person another time, who was a gentleman by blood, as well as commission. He was then a cornet of horse. He turned as red as fire, and said in a very presumptuous manner, that he was "Blood himself." It was thus that I learnt his name. I sent him back to his employer with a desire that he should be reprimanded; and never heard of him but once afterwards till the year 63, when he was concerned in the plot against Dublin Castle. The Declaration for taking up arms to restore religion upon the footing of the Solemn League and Covenant was of his writing. He fled from place to place in Ireland, England, and France; joined the rebels in Scotland, and was afterwards concerned in an affray with the sheriffs' men in Yorkshire, where he rescued some of his old comrades from the gallows, not without bloodshed, which he no more values than water. Since then (I blush to say) he has been a good deal with the Duke of Bucks; and between you and me, Sir Ralph, he has got possession of some unhappy secrets, which he has the insolence to mix up with intimations that——But what must be borne, must be."

His Grace here evinced a good deal of emotion, which I did no good to by exclaiming, "Your Grace knew it was Blood, then, when

you met him riding by Mickleham Park with Buckingham,—the day that Sir Philip was there?"

"I did," said the Duke hastily, "I did; but for the reasons I have just mentioned—In short, I never suspected that even he could carry his impudence so far as he has done. The Countess and he are beings so widely dissimilar, that I should have as soon thought a devil could have had matrimonial designs on an angel."

"'Tis too often the case, I fear," said I, not dropping the subject; for if Ormond was perplexed, I was irritated.

His Grace hastily went on. "Some say the man was a renegade from the loyal cause; for he got lands, ay, and lordships too, under letters patent from the late King; but, I believe, the Puritans got them for him. It was at the time of the fall of the great man who governed Ireland before me. Well: these lands, like others belonging to better and richer men (for it was but a beggarly territory they had given him, and he had no excuse, as others had, of the old Irish blood) became forfeit to the Crown; for which, instead of considering himself lucky in escaping the gallows, he pretends to consider me responsible, and from time to time does not scruple to send me threatening letters, in case nothing is done for him! The man is mad with impu-

dence. The reason for his calling himself Sandford, I cannot guess, unless it was out of revenge against a Captain of that name, who turned evidence. Perhaps the more impudent the mask, the less suspicion he thinks it will rouse; for nothing equals him that way. His Captaincy was a very modest assumption. His real rank was Lieutenant. But, as he says he should have been a Colonel by this time, he is now Colonel Blood, whenever he is not Dalton or Beaton. At one time he was Colonel Sarney. Sarney and Beaton are the names of the townships the Puritans gave him. The last time I heard of him, he was a Quaker! Wherever he is, his calling is to do the most impudent thing in the world; but his gambling (for luckily he has that element of ruin in him) would have settled him in a jail before this, if it had not been for the unhappy man who is again at the head of his Majesty's councils. What will be the end of these, God only knows; but I tell you plainly, Sir Ralph, that as long as there are such councillors, and such agents to work their purposes, an honest man had need of all the consciousness of his integrity to walk boldly in noon day, much more to shew them the countenance they deserve. For my part, I shall not bate an inch of it."

I took the liberty of making his Grace some

compliments on the latter part of his speech, and then observed that he seemed to have very particular information of the movements of the would-be Colonel. The Duke shrugged his shoulders, and replied, that in the imperfect state of things in this world, men in the administration of government were sometimes forced to have more particular sources of information than they could wish; and then, with a smile, he mentioned the name of Braythwaite, who, he said, had given him full, and he believed true accounts, of some very good as well as very ill men, not omitting the young gentleman he had the pleasure of discoursing with.

I behaved as well as I could under the impression that his Grace was well acquainted with my former treatment of Miss Randolph, and I believe he saw what was in my thoughts, for he added hastily,—“I confess I was not prepared to find such an ingenuous nature at court. We all have our faults. Fortunate it is, when they are such as we need not scruple to confess. The virtues with which they are accompanied are sure to outweigh them.”

It may be imagined I was not slow to express my gratitude for this character of me. As we had both of us been wrong, we now seemed inclined to think as well of each other as we could, and the Duke grew upon my good opinion, though he kept

a sort of distance between us, to which I was not accustomed, and which, to say the truth, I hardly thought warrantable towards a person of so ancient a family; for, as I had no title to speak of, I was all for birth and antiquity. I had lamented a thousand times that the King and some others did not maintain a greater stateliness and reserve, yet now that I tasted of it from his Irish representative, it was not at all to my liking. It made me call to mind how unpleasant it was in Clarendon. The truth was, his Majesty had spoiled me with the rest; nor could I bring myself to like Ormond as I should, purely perhaps on that account.

The discourse then returned to Sir Philip. If there had been a doubt as to the perpetration of my friend's seizure, Braythwaite's communications would have removed it. Sir Philip was to be got out of the way, to give a final chance both to Blood and his employer; to Blood, for a forcible marriage with Lady Vavasour; and to Buckingham, for a better termination to his scenes with Miss Randolph, than he had met with at the garden wall. The plot of the forged papers was admirably managed, for nothing of the kind had been heard of; and Sir Philip, as anybody else would have been, was thoroughly deceived. Instead, therefore, of taking measures to return to England, he no sooner arrived

at the Canaries, than he betook himself to the remotest part of the island, and would have turned hermit, perhaps, if he had not lit upon a house inhabited by a widow lady and her niece, who, happening to nurse him in a severe illness, detained him with them till their own return. By accidental news from a wine-merchant, who served Lord Manchester, he learnt that Lady Vavasour was not married; and then, for the first time, though without alluding to the circumstances, he wrote to the Duke of Ormond, and let him know where he was. The Duke, the instant he received my friend's letter, dispatched a schooner to the Canaries, on purpose to bring him away; and nothing seemed requisite to complete the delightful prospects before us, but that Buckingham and his agent should be brought to account, and the victors terminate the tragi-comedy with a double marriage. But two formidable objections started to this happy anticipation;—the one of a very provoking description, the other most appalling. The Duke said, that it might seem to be an easy matter to bring Buckingham to account. Sir Philip would go to him, tax him with his offence, demand satisfaction, or expose him. Well: what would Buckingham answer? He would deny the thing *in toto*. He would protest that he knew nothing about it; that he had long had reason to see through the character

of Blood, who was the last man in the world he should protect; and that if he could catch hold of the infamous privateer and tarpaulin who dared to implicate him in such transactions, he would have him hung up *in terrorem* by the river's side. He would then throw some ingenious difficulties in the way of suspecting even Blood himself; and finish by waiving his right to complain of Sir Philip, on his own account, by the reason of the damnable trouble he had undergone, with which no man could more heartily condole than himself. "I know a similar case," said the Duke, "in which he acted precisely in this fashion, though Blood was a party concerned. Braythwaite informed me of the whole of it; and the complainant was a distant kinsman of my own. Yet he could get no redress. Buckingham denied everything; nay, he made a favour of taking no steps to resent the charge. The agents could not be met with; and the business, though staring with certainty, was obliged to be let drop."

I thought to myself, that Sir Philip was not a man to be put off in this fashion, if he chose to push the inquiry as a matter of duty; but, feeling anxious to be informed of the Duke's other mystery, which he seemed to have kept to the last, as if it were a tragic secret indeed, I asked, with some emotion, what reason there was to suppose that the

marriage with Lady Vavasour could not take place?

"Simply this," said Ormond, with a look of vexation, "that our friend is under promise of marriage to another lady."

"Is it possible!" cried I. "Surely, my Lord Duke, this is a point on which you must be deceived. Sir Philip is not one of those ordinary men, who—"

"Pardon me, Sir Ralph," interrupted the Duke, "I see all which you would say, and acknowledge it; but Sir Philip unfortunately does not know what you and I know. He is not aware of the change in Lady Vavasour's feelings towards him; and it is now too late to inform him. Nay, his friends, if they have any value for his peace, must studiously keep the secret. The young lady, in the house of whose aunt he lived, nursed him in his long illness. She fell sick in her turn, I suspect of love for her patient; and he is to marry her as soon as he arrives in England. I cannot help thinking, nevertheless, that he comes back, purely because he has discovered that Lady Vavasour is unmarried, though he may have no plans in consequence; and the young lady is recommended the voyage for her health. The main reason alleged for it is, that the aunt is coming upon matters of business."

Here, thought I, is dreadful news for my friends ! I was so affected, that for a moment I could not speak. When I recovered, I asked the Duke, how it was that Sir Philip was not married already ? He said, the lady remained too ill. It was expected the voyage would re-establish her health.

The Duke abruptly turned the conversation. He saw how I was affected : he had nothing further to tell me on the subject ; and he justly concluded that nothing would tend to divert my thoughts more agreeably, than the prospect of my union with Miss Randolph. What he said, however, was not a little startling.

I have before intimated, that my paternal inheritance was sufficient to support me as a gentleman, but not to maintain a wife and family in the station the world would look for. I had formed twenty projects for increasing my fortune, but in vain. There was no war. I had no previous connection with the King's household ; I mean, when he was in France. I had no interest among the new men, or Presbyterians, who did not like to be forsaken, though they forsook one another. The King had repeatedly promised to take care of me ; and the title with which he had graced my secretaryship of embassy, was to be considered an earnest of something solid : but nothing came. The profuseness of Castle-

main, and his own negligence, kept him as poor as myself. Every gift, or possibility of gift—every office, reversion, or hope of it, was snatched out of his hands by persons less delicate, or such as could not be denied. Even in order to raise money, it was necessary to give it.

I listened, therefore, with no small anxiety to the communication which the Duke of Ormond seemed preparing to make me. To say the truth, I would fain have dispensed with being obliged to him. I was not sorry to marry the natural daughter of so great a man, even on his own account; and I loved her so, that I would have married her, let her have been whose daughter she might. But I felt that I brought him at least as much as he gave; or rather, that I should be considered by people of family as conferring the honour; and he could not conceal from me, with all his pride, that he thought so too. His pride, indeed, forced this conviction upon him; for the more he valued himself on the purity of his descent, the more he respected the like qualification in others. With all his affability to people in general, his feelings were so strong that way, that you might note a decided difference in the mode with which he received men of old families, and the comparative, though still friendly nonchalance of his behaviour

to those of smaller pretensions. In the one, he seemed to recognise something of the reflection of his own dignity. The others sometimes mistook his greater freedom for a greater good-will; but they were deceived, as in this matter they always are. There was great pride, not to say something worse, in the very respectfulness with which he treated the King. But more of this presently. Upon the whole, this was the quality that offended me in him. It was evidently more mixed up than he was aware, with his best feelings; and when we are alive to a fault in another, which is in a constant state of exhibition, while the exhibitor is laying claim to a merit that is opposed to it, we are more apt to refuse him our good will, than if he had no merits at all. We hate to see him endeavouring to beguile us, and pretending not to have his share of imperfection; for these people somehow never make a concession that does not redound to their honour. If they do, the fault was something that arose out of the ebullitions of youth, or an immaturity of judgment: or their concessions are so general, that you may see how sorely they would resent any charge in particular. To be sure, they can prostrate themselves heartily before heaven; but that is because heaven is the only thing they admit to be above them; and because they

have a certain misgiving, that the greater the power, the less it is to be offended with impunity.

The Duke said, "that as I was to marry the young lady, which, under all the circumstances, he could not help considering as an honour done at least as much to him as to myself, perhaps he ought to say a great deal more so, he felt himself bound to tell me plainly who she was,—who was her mother." The solemnity with which he spoke, made me listen with double anxiety. Indeed my heart, as the phrase is, leaped into my mouth at these words; for, besides entertaining a natural curiosity on the point, my own pride was concerned. I felt, that nothing could undo my love for her; but I was more than willing to discover, that she was not the daughter of a chambermaid or a rustic. I believe if Ormond had known my thoughts, he would have smiled a little scornfully. His first words relieved my apprehensions. She was the daughter of a lady (he told me) of high rank, unmarried, of a very gay humour, and (truth forced him to say) of a levity which it would not become him to allude to, on an occasion less painful than the present. She had been pleased to think too well of him.

(I have no doubt of it, thought I)
—under very peculiar circumstances; that is to say, he had had the pleasure of rendering a ser-

vice to a brother of hers, which the lively imagination both of the gentleman and the lady magnified into something extraordinary; and the wine flowing profusely one summer's evening at her father's house, where, to say the truth, the manners were at all times free enough, he, (the Duke,) who was then, though married, too liable to be carried away by the soldier-like habits, in which he had been brought up;—"in short, Sir Ralph, the lady was a little too kind, and I fear you will think me not a little ungrateful; but right is right, and I am sorry to be compelled to add, that for reasons which you can better guess, than I can explain, I never felt certain that the lady was my property. I know what you would say:—yes, Lady Isabella (you shall know her other name by and by,) recommended the child to me, as my own, by letter, and on her death-bed too; but I have good reason to know, that her Ladyship was the same careless laughing creature to the last: and among all the gallants that surrounded her, I had no right to suppose, that she had given an exclusive preference to me, or that her good nature, as she would have called it, would not have led her to screen a poorer one at my expence. I really blush, Sir Ralph," hastily continued the Duke, "to express a doubt of this kind. I blush to speak of the matter at all, or to seem to throw a

slur on the memory of a lady, much more of one who shewed a regard for me; but I have lived long enough to know, that there are graver things for a human being to consider than the pleasures or the preferences of this life, and that we cannot pick and choose what we shall think, especially when experience comes to discourse with youth, and family interests demand a perfect candour."

I requested to know what particular object his Grace had in making me acquainted with his doubts relative to the young lady's birth. I said with some warmth, "that I should have married her, with his leave, had she been the daughter of the lowest female retainer in his household. As it was, I was rather too much pleased perhaps, which he might attribute to my court education; and as to fortune, I looked to nothing more than was proper for a young lady of her breeding and accomplishments, and if it were the least possible of the kind, (which was perhaps not less than I had a right to look for,) I should only regard it as giving me the greater opportunity of shewing the solidity of my affection."

He pressed my hand with a smile of real regard, and said, "I will be as plain with you on one point as another. The doubt, of which I have never been able to get rid, has produced in me, I must own, an unwillingness to see more of the

young lady than I could help. I received nevertheless such good accounts of her sense and disposition, from the worthy man to whose charge I had entrusted her, that at length I thought it my duty to encourage in myself a belief in my relationship; and on the happy return of his Majesty to his dominions, I went into Surrey for the purpose of acknowledging her as my daughter, in case the accounts were true. It is but justice both to you and myself to say, that they were more than realised; and though I saw no likeness in her countenance either to myself or her mother, or indeed to anybody I know, my heart could not but warm towards a lovely human creature situated as she was, and evincing the most touching gratitude to one whose gratuitous benefactions (as she thought them) were perhaps no more than what a father owed her. I acknowledged her accordingly, and had the pleasure of giving her great happiness. But now comes the difficulty. You know, Sir Ralph, how I am situated in this extraordinary court, where a man of any decency of behaviour is thought to be a reproach and a stumbling block. The Duke of Buckingham has contrived to bring me over from my government in Ireland, to answer to the most ridiculous charges of profusion and mismanagement. He dares even to insinuate, that my accounts are incorrect. He

does not say so himself: he comes open-armed to me with his nauseous welcome; but I know what he is doing all the rest of the day. He wants to have the government himself. He wishes to play King the second, as he cannot play King the first; and he would really play it. He would perform the part like a child, and make a fool of himself, perhaps a victim; for, considering he is a wit, it is astonishing what a real fool he is; what a practical simpleton; what a credulous and headlong baby. He pretended the other day, when he was lending himself to the beggarly advices of his astrologers, that he was studying chemistry, and distilling waters. Very likely he was; but one of them was the *elixir vitae*; and in some devil's ashes or other, he was to see the figure of himself, rising like a king. To day an atheist, to-morrow a puritan, the next day a fiddler, he is never anything truly but a libertine and a mountebank. But he is very dangerous; and if it were not that the King has certain private—Well, no matter: Buckingham will not succeed; he will not be Lord Lieutenant; nor shall I be ruined: I am too strong for him; but I shall have some trouble in repelling his attacks; it will take me some time; and meanwhile—you will understand what I say—it will be very necessary that I afford his creatures no handle for new insinuations; no ground of in-

solence and annoyance upon which—(and here the Duke gave one of his proud blushes)—upon which, Sir Ralph, I do not feel perfectly secure of being able to repel them. We all have our faults: I never pretended to be without mine: I am free to confess to anybody, as I do to them, that I have had my gallantries in my time; and the wits and good fellows know, that I can still drink, on occasion, a little more than I ought. But as the decent liberality of expence, in which I have thought fit to do honour to his Majesty's government in Ireland—(and surely no king ought to be otherwise represented)—has been charged upon me as profusion, and this scoundrel Blood has got a diabolical trick of charging people with vices at random, in the belief (naturally generated by his own wickedness), that some of his accusations will stick, it is highly desirable, not only for my own interests, but for those of virtue herself, that one of the few honest men at court should not be thought worse than he is. Understand me, well, Sir Ralph. When these matters are settled, Miss Randolph is yours, together with a handsome portion out of the lands consigned to me in Ireland; but till then, which perhaps will take six months or a year, you will be kind enough to do a further violence to your passion. I trust, at the end, you will not find yourself unrewarded.

Certainly you shall not be the first to discover a new vice in me."

The Duke spoke this with so much cordiality, at the same time pressing me on the hand, and looking in my eyes with a sort of anticipation of his thanks, that I felt myself bound to make his high spirit as easy as possible under these committals of himself, and therefore returned as cordial an acknowledgment. I was, indeed, very well pleased to hear of a portion of land, wherever situated; but suddenly a thought occurred to me, and I expressed it.

"His Grace, I presumed, meant to acknowledge Miss Randolph openly as his daughter?"

"As openly as you would have me, sir," answered the Duke, looking more disconcerted than surprised.

"Assuredly, my Lord Duke, you may well imagine, how openly that would be."

"We will be sincere with each other throughout," returned Ormond. "I have the best assurances, the very highest opinion, Sir Ralph, of your sincerity and prudence, or there could have been no connexion between us. Let but these public matters be settled, and I promise you, on the faith of a gentleman, that whatever it will please you, as a man of honour and generosity, to desire, shall be done. If you are content, on

reflection, to keep a doubtful matter to yourself, and to the few friends acquainted with it, well and good: if not, perhaps the pain to be given to one of the best of wives and mothers, who never seeks to know what I think fit to conceal from her, may come in aid of the reflection; but should your conclusions on this point be different from what mine are at present, the pain shall be given. It will be borne well, and perhaps I ought to have taken off the edge of it long ago; but a circumstance which I cannot explain, added to the doubt of the matter itself, prevented me. At all events, my sins cannot be presented to her in a more excusable shape than that of Miss Randolph; and he that accompanies them will be no disrecommendation."

The Duke again pressed my hand, looking at me with one of those expressions which I have before noticed, and which, to say the truth, were very attractive, nor could I well find it in my heart what to reply. I did not chuse to give up the claims of Miss Randolph. On the other hand, the prospect of bringing distress into a house no less exalted by virtue than by rank, was extremely embarrassing. I muttered something, I scarcely know what, expressive of my gratitude for his Grace's confidence, and my unwillingness to connect anything like distress with the idea of his charming daughter; and so, leaving this point

unsettled, and undertaking to communicate the news of Sir Philip's safety to the ladies, I found myself next minute in the open air, with feelings very like the mingled pain and pleasure of a receding intoxication.

CHAPTER XII.

It cannot rain, says the proverb, but it pours. Events soon thickened in an extraordinary manner, and they began at once. I had scarcely written across the channel, when I had a letter from Mickleham, informing me of the return home of the ladies and their acquaintance, with the news: and not an hour after its arrival, I found myself in the arms of Sir Philip! What a moment it was! I had often wondered to see men embrace, and disliked the custom; but I found, on this occasion, how quickly great emotions dash aside preconceived judgments. My friend's manners had as little of the foreigner in them as mine; and yet the moment he entered the room, the mutual impulse was so strong upon us, that we rushed as heartily together as a Pylades and Orestes; and both, in separating, were in tears.

I had wished to delay writing to the ladies, or

rather to communicate anything further than Sir Philip's safety, till I had seen his betrothed bride, and so judged how far there were any hopes remaining of the dissolubility of the tie. I did not wish to be unjust; but knowing what I did, I could not contemplate with patience the necessity of keeping from my friend the news of Lady Vavasour's passion for him. I too well understood his nature, not to be certain, that he must still love her; and it would be very shocking to see both of them unhappy for life, perhaps by the intervention of a female whose whole merit might consist in her having trod about his bed with a soft step, and then taken considerately to her own. If her merits were real, the case was worse. In short, I dreaded the seeing her.

Miss Randolph's letter, which requested to see me immediately, relieved me of part of this anxiety. It told me, not only that the Countess was well, but that the certainty of Sir Philip's being alive had given her a momentary vivacity, in spite of the news that accompanied it. Miss Randolph feared it would not last; but still the news was broken to her, and she was no worse. Miss Vavasour, however, was not so well; she was in a singular state of mixed joy and sorrow, for which my charmer could not account; and what was extraordinary, it was to her the intelligence

was sent. Who sent it, Miss Randolph could not imagine; but Miss Vavasour "hoped that we should all know speedily."

After interchanging some more congratulations with my friend, almost as breathless as the first, and satisfying myself on one or two points connected with his seizure and illness, I spoke of the Duke of Ormond and Miss Randolph. He saw I avoided mentioning the Countess, and said to me in a very impressive manner: "I know all you can tell me respecting dear Ellen. I have this moment come from the Duke. You will be very happy. Thank you for what you tell me, and for what you do *not* tell me. I know that also."

I looked at him with astonishment, wondering to see him so calm, if he believed that the Countess loved him. The expression of my face was so remarkable, that he was startled in turn, and said with an air, at once intimating a wish for the confirmation of what he said, and waiving any further:

"She is well. Her aunt wrote us word so."

"Yes," said I.—I could hardly speak. Seeing me so moved, he turned aside, and looked out of the window.

After a few minutes' pause, he said, in a voice which it took all his courage to keep steady, "You know me too well, dear Esher, not to know how

indestructible a certain idea is in my mind ; but as the reverse was equally indestructible in that of another, and new duties have come in aid of old necessities, I have every reason in the world to conduct myself like a man, and render the kind-hearted girl who has thought me worth loving, as happy as I am able. You will see all my feelings in the journal I have kept for you ; for I have kept a journal, though I wrote no letters. You know the timidity which over-much thinking has produced in me, on some points. I meant to write, but I did not dare it at first, and then I delayed so long, that shame was added to the dread. I always intended it however, and now here I am, my own letter-carrier. To suffering I have been used : I shall now try hard to become acquainted with happiness."

These affecting words, expressive of a lot so different from what he deserved, increased the impatience I felt to tell him how he was beloved ; but I did my best to conceal the emotion. It was clear that he loved still, and that he did not love his intended bride. I began to suspect, that some further deception had been practised upon him ; and this I seized upon as a consolation. It furnished me with an excuse for still hoping to see the new connexion dissolved ; nay, for doing my

best to dissolve it, which I was now resolved on, let his betrothed be as charming, or even loving, as she might. Had she risked her life for him? Had she offended and repented, and lost her bloom in his behalf? For nothing less than a mixture of all these humanities, bad and good, would satisfy me, though her perfections were qualified by as much suffering as he had gone through himself, which was not very likely. I begged him without delay to give me the journal; and put it in my pocket as if it had been a warrant against the fair unknown. My eagerness made him smile. I now had leisure to observe his face; and internally called Blood and Buckingham all the fools in existence, to observe the effect that two or three years had had upon it. Why the devil should they be able to spoil a face like his, and for no good to anybody. He did not look older at first sight. I had always noted that there was something of an invincible juvenility about his face, except in the eyes; and the air and the southern sun had embrowned him. But on observing narrowly, the youthful smoothness of his face was gone; the temples seemed beaten in; the forehead had wrinkles in it; and his glossy brown locks were now dullened and mixed with grey. He also stooped as he sat. His person,

however, seemed as noble as ever, when he stood up, or walked about. His step was as firm; and his eyes were finer than I ever saw them.

He now increased and satisfied my curiosity in a breath, respecting Miss Vavasour's correspondent. "You will be pleased," said he, "to find in the journal, that Miss Vavasour" (he got this word out as if resolved to conquer a difficulty) "received the news of my safety from Lord Waringstown, and that it was his Lordship who brought me away. He was too quick for the schooner of the Duke of Ormond."

"Lord Waringstown!" cried I, "who is he?"

"Lord Waringstown," returned Sir Philip, "is my old friend and beloved tutor, Mr Waring. He has succeeded to his brother's title, and by permission has left the priesthood, and mixed with the world. Indeed, he had never left it, as far as beneficence went; and his superiors reckon, no doubt, upon his doing still more good to their cause in a lay character, now that priests are under such a cloud."

"It delights me," said I, "to think that I shall have the honour of knowing him. But I did not know he was acquainted with Miss Vavasour."

"I did not tell you of the intimacy," returned my friend, "neither did I tell him of mine with

the same lady, as long as I could conceal it from him. You will see the reasons in the journal."

After a little further discourse, my friend took me to his lodgings, where he introduced me to his intended bride, her aunt, and Lord Waringstown. I hardly knew which to look at first, the lady or the lord. The noble Jesuit seemed equally interested in myself, following up a cordial welcome of me, with a scrutiny of my countenance hardly compatible with good breeding. He guessed that I was a little disconcerted, for when we had all taken our chairs, he immediately rose again, and coming towards me, and taking me by the hand, said with that extreme but delightful sincerity which belonged to all Sir Philip's connexions: "Pardon me for looking so hard at you, but you may imagine how much the friend of my friend interests me, and I am interested in him still more than he can suppose." I arose, and bowed upon his hand.

His Lordship was a pale man, very genteel and like a nobleman, rather above the middle height, and with one of those young aspects (for his age) which I have often observed to accompany a life of scholarship, where the heart is good, even though it has seen great trouble. But what struck me most in his countenance, and made me repeatedly

turn my eyes upon him, was his likeness to Miss Randolph. He must have commenced his tutorship with Sir Philip when very young, for he was not yet fifty, and my friend afterwards told me, that he was surprised whenever he thought of his age; "but boys," said he, "always have an elderly notion of youths, who are but a little older than themselves." This is true. I remember the ludicrous sensation I experienced sometime after I left college, on meeting a pompous little fellow who had topped me by a head and shoulders when I first went there, and who was the tallest of my companions. I was now a head and shoulders above him, and did not know whether to feel most pride, pity, or mirth, in looking down upon the same swelling little individual; who told me I had grown "quite a giant."

The young lady, Miss Earlom, received me with as much zeal and kindness, after her fashion, as the noble Lord; for which I consigned her to the devil. She was also very handsome, with an expression of good-natured delight, for which I consigned her to four more devils. I could not bear to think, that fortune had played the poor Countess such a trick, particularly as her Ladyship deserved her suffering, and the new bride was not to be found fault with. She had even wit. On every side, the gates of Mercy seemed

to be closing on dear Lady Vavasour, and on her lover too; for I could discern, by his manner, that he considered Miss Earlom as a good-hearted girl, to whom he was bound to behave affectionately, and whom he hoped to make happy, rather than as one who would make him so. She was very fair, though her father had married a Spaniard, and she had lived the greater part of her life in a hot country. Her father, an Englishman, who had long been dead, as well as his wife, was the richest wine-merchant in the Canaries:—no great family, I thought, to intermarry with the Hernes! But sick beds, with a pretty nurse beside them, make havoc with genealogies.

The aunt, a little thin old swarthy woman, with curls *à la Montespan*, was a perfect devil. I saw through her at once, though she flattered me enough to make me sick. She had a face as regular and as senseless as a mask, for which she thought herself handsome; bustling about, and playing off attitudes, for which (I beg pardon) I could have kicked her. She followed the niece about like a duenna, giving us to understand that she had had a great deal of trouble in bringing her up, though one of the best girls in the world, but “girls would be girls;” and for her own part, though it did not become her to give herself girlish airs, she was not yet old enough to forget

the proper indulgence for young ladies of her age, though it was right to look after them. During this vulgar stuff, poor Miss Earlom tried to look as unvexed as she could, though it forced upon her a gravity which argued well for her good sense. Lord Waringstown looked at me with (I thought) a little bit of the slyness of a Jesuit. Sir Philip mused, and seemed to hear nothing.

I had remarked, on entering the room, that before Sir Philip introduced me to any one in particular, an irrepressible impulse seemed to take him towards his noble tutor, of whom he made some inquiry. Lord Waringstown with a look of great vivacity, said, "Yes, thank God! 'tis perfect, 'tis perfect!" Upon which Sir Philip turned round, begging pardon of the company, and introduced me with a double air of satisfaction. There was something in the look which his Lordship gave me at that moment, and in what he said to me afterwards, which excited my curiosity, and he now renewed it by asking me to step with him into another room. Sir Philip looked at us, and heaved a sigh, which he turned off into some indifferent remark, taking at the same time the opportunity to leave us all. Miss Earlom returned my bow with her usual provoking sweetness. As to the aunt, she fidgetted, and hemmed, and smiled,

as if she could have cut all our throats for not letting her into the secret.

As soon as we had got into our room and closed the door—"My dear Sir Ralph," said Lord Waringstown, "you will not wonder that I claim the privilege of an old friend, knowing as I do all about you, and aware that you know everything respecting us, but one. I have seen the ladies at Mickleham, and this morning I have seen the Duke of Ormond."

I found this exordium very mysterious, not knowing whether it applied to Sir Philip or myself. Concluding, however, that the former must be concerned, I said, "Your Lordship then has brought good news to our friend?"

He again pressed my hand, and the tears came into his eyes. "Pardon me," said he, "for delighting to see you thus think of your friend before yourself. I have great hopes,—yes, the very greatest,—that everybody will have reason to rejoice in the inquiries I have been making; but at present, they concern you alone. You know what the subject of your conversation was with the Duke of Ormond. There is now an end to all perplexities. You have an estate, you have a bride, you have a willing and avowed father-in-law, you have a proud, an affectionate, an excel-

lent mother-in-law, and the father is proud too, nay, most happy."

"You astonish me, and enchant me, my Lord! I may then ask who the lady is, and how it happens that the Duke has been so suddenly induced to come forward, even by the kind interest which your Lordship has taken in my behalf?"

"The Duke does *not* come forward, except as a guest," replied my noble friend, looking still delighted. A softer emotion then came over his face, and he said: "I have been used to trouble, Sir Ralph, and I can bear it, but joy shakes me in the utterance. You know the doubt which his Grace of Ormond could not help feeling respecting the claims which your mistress had upon him. Suffice to say, at present, that they were just. Yes, indeed, they were, and yet nobody living is to blame. The mother was a wedded wife: the father was honourable, though mistaken. In me behold him."

At these words, uttered in the kindest voice, his hand again placed upon mine, and his eyes fixed earnestly upon me, I was seized with such a transport of delight and reverence, that I involuntarily bent upon a knee, as if my father himself had risen from his grave. He raised and took me in his arms, blessing me several times over, for my love to his daughter.

I said that I ought rather to feel ashamed at ever having experienced an interval in my acquaintance with her ; but that I trusted my whole life would shew my gratitude.

“ No, no,” interrupted this excellent man, “ you have nothing to reproach yourself with. Sir Philip’s friend—*her* friend—has nothing wherewith to reproach himself. When I consider how good and confiding she is, and that she had no real father at that time, nor even the semblance of a mother ; and that you came back, and you searched for my boy, and you told the Duke you would marry her, had she been the daughter of the lowest menial in his household, and clearly you would have been her friend and protector for life—”(Lord Waringstown’s emotions here overcame his voice. He resumed :)—“ You did not love her enough, when you first knew her. You had no parents yourself ; you were very young : you did not know of what her solitary and sweet nature was capable ;—but to have lived in a court, and yet to be able to love when you *do* love, is merit enough with me in any man, much more in one who can also be a friend and fellow-labourer ; for you and I, my young friend, have worked in the same cause, without knowing it.”

He alluded, I thought, to my search after Sir Philip ; and he did so, but not without an allusion to what he was pleased to consider my general

regard for the interests of truth and humanity. The peculiar nature of his life had given an exalted turn to his mind on all subjects, in spite of the ease and good humour with which he behaved in ordinary ; and at the moment, I could see that he was moved even still more than he appeared to be. Habits of reflection, joined to the tenderness of frame, more or less produced by a recluse mode of living, had given him an extreme tenderness of conscience, in all matters that related to himself, or his own merits ; while, on the other hand, his good-nature, benevolence, and his wish to find sources of consolation, induced him to think as well of others as possible ; so that, while he overlooked the greatest virtues in himself, the least evidence of goodness or generosity in his neighbour, warmed his heart into a sort of transport of gratitude. This character is very uncommon in the world, where everybody is bustling for himself, and obliged to insist perhaps more on his pretensions, than he would under any other circumstances ; but I suspect it is oftener found out of it, than men of the world imagine. At all events, I may assert from experience, that there is sure to be a greater or less tendency to it, in proportion as a goodnatured man has been thoughtful, secluded, and afflicted.

Lord Waringstown and myself were in the middle

of a conversation deeply interesting to both of us, a great part of which concerned Sir Philip, when the aunt abruptly came in, asking if she had not been called. I smiled at this specimen of Canary island breeding. Lord Waringstown answered politely in the negative, adding, with a goodnatured smile, that had her presence been necessary, we should have done ourselves the honour of coming to her. She looked as if relieved from some unpleasant thought, and retreated with a face of horrible courtesy. "The poor woman," said his Lordship, "can never see us speaking aside, but she finds some excuse for interrupting us." He then rose, and left the house on business concerning our friend, leaving me to rejoin Miss Earlom, whom I was now disposed to find pleasanter than before. She accordingly did appear to me so charming, that had nothing been in the way, I should have tried still harder than I did, to make amends for my former coldness. But next day I was to see Miss Waring! How happy was I to give her that name, and yet how unwilling to part with that of Randolph!

Meanwhile, till Sir Philip re-appears, I will take the opportunity of relating the story of Lord Waringstown, partly as told me by himself, and partly by my friend.

He was the younger son of Lord Waringstown, a Catholic nobleman of large estates in the county of Armagh, most of which had been forfeited during the troubles, and restored only but now. At the court of Charles the First, Mr Waring became acquainted with Miss Vavasour, daughter of a younger brother of an Earl of that name, who was grandfather of the one that married Lady Margaret de Tormy. She was one of the loveliest and sprightliest young women in England, not more remarkable for beauty than for goodness of heart; but, unfortunately for her, became intimate with Lady Isabella T——, a beauty of her own age, and naturally as good as herself, but who carried her animal spirits to the highest pitch of wildness and indiscretion. Had Lady Isabella been a Frenchwoman, her vivacity might have laughed and made merry through life with impunity; or had she been an inhabitant of Cyprus, or an ancient poetess, or a modern poetess, or a beauty of one of the islands that poets love, bathing in the sea like a fish, and not averse to seamen, (vide Sir Richard's Camoens,*) she might have been as innocent as she seemed to think herself; but whatever licence there was in the court of his Majesty's father, (and there was a great deal more than the clergy would have us believe,) her Ladyship carried her overt-acts

* Sir Richard Fanshaw's translation of the *Lusiad*.—*Edit.*
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to an excess that (to say the least of it) was not allowed in England. Her family, indeed, set the example. They say the vivacity began in the time of Elizabeth, not without the countenance of some persons very extraordinary both for rank and reputation; but they could hardly have contemplated that a few individuals should claim a privilege for vagaries not tolerated in the rest of the community, and yet be neither courtezans nor King's mistresses. I hate hypocrisy, and I do not pretend to have had more virtue when young, than my neighbours; but either we are all in the wrong respecting the different manners expected of men and women, or poor Lady Isabel's relations had a good deal to answer for. I spoke one day on the subject to my philosopher, Sir Philip, but somebody coming in, the conversation was changed, and somehow or other, we never renewed it. I believe it was understood among us, that Lady Waringstown took it as a kindness, that nobody spoke about it. In a word, amour followed amour;—the lady lived like her fathers and mothers; having an equal right, she said, to please herself, and shew her admiration of what was amiable. Poor soul! she was amiable enough to break her heart, for that was the termination of her mistake. Horton said, she had left the remembrance of her at Oxford, where she was once on a visit to a master of one of the colleges, whose lady hoped to do her good. A strange place

it was to do her good in ! It was at the time too, that the court was there. She used to appear on Sundays at chapel, looking like an angel in a picture, both for beauty of countenance and lightness of apparel, and all the young men's heads were turned. The father at length becoming sensible, that such manners were not good for his daughter, submitted her to the care of a distant relation, a venerable and excellent woman, who undertook to reform her. Unluckily, in the list of things to be omitted, she did not omit the court; especially as it was now in misfortune. There the poor girl found new lovers, though at first she behaved with more caution; and there it was that Miss Vavasour became acquainted with her. The old lady encouraged the intimacy for the sake of her giddy kinswoman. She did not consider, that it might end in being the ruin of both.

It happened about one and the same period, Mr Waring fell in love with Miss Vavasour, and a young Lord (I forget his name) with the Lady Isabella. The love was returned on both sides; and the ladies confided their passion to one another. Unfortunately, it was concealed on both sides from their kindred; the parents of Miss Vavasour and young Waring being violently opposed to one another in matters of religion, and the young Lord's relations having specially warned

him against the seductions of Lady Isabel. This was, perhaps, the reason why he ventured to try them. After some months' acquaintance, a private marriage hastily took place on the part of Waring and Miss Vavasour; and Lady Isabella pretended the same with her lover, though it was not so. A bustling little woman, then newly married to our old friend Mr Braythwaite, and a relation of the worthy Mr Blood's, though not partaking of his worse passions, undertook to see that no event should distress the two loving couples; and when Miss Vavasour (Mrs Waring rather) found herself, to her great perturbation, obliged to retire to some friendly house, her Ladyship, not less distressed, was under a like compulsion. And what was the reason that her usual vivacity should forsake her? Alas! she now felt herself really in love for the first time; she longed to secure her lover by marriage, and she was afraid to hint it to him, for fear he should give her up. Lady Isabel had now begun to fear that she was not respected; and even on that account, her natural generosity made her hesitate to ask her lover to unite his destiny into hers.

In the midst of these contending emotions, which fell with sudden violence upon her, and which ultimately hastened her death, she retained enough of her heedless vivacity to put in practice

a very singular resolution. A few weeks after her acquaintance with her lover, she had been on a visit to her brother, Lord Francis T——, who had some services done him (I know not how) by the Duke, then Marquis, of Ormond, who was on one of his visits to England on the King's affairs. The chivalrous character of the Marquis, added to the services he had done her brother, to whom she was much attached, made one of those impressions on the poor girl, the consequences of which would have been more suitable to a chapter in the 'Morte d'Arthur,' than a leaf in the history of church and state. The Marquis, who had had a devout as well as a court education, and who was always sinning and repenting, seemed to be of the same opinion; and unfortunately he suffered the lady to discern it. In fact, I know not in what particular way, but somehow or other, very unequivocally, he gave her to understand, that he thought they had both been in the wrong; which so much disconcerted the lady, who had conceived a great esteem for him after her fashion, that she could never afterwards hear his name mentioned without blushing. What is worse, the situation in which she had found herself was owing to him: the period was approaching, in which her lover must be certain it was not owing to himself; and though she was aware of her character in the

world, yet as she really loved him, and had awakened a tenderness on his part, so great as to put him upon serious thoughts of marrying her, she had not been able to summon up courage enough to tell him of his predecessor. She was now to anticipate a worse surprise. She told him, and he fled ! A succession of convulsions ensued, which killed the child, and a few days afterwards, she died herself. The young Lord had taken it in his head, not very unnaturally, that his mistress would have deceived him if she could ; otherwise, said he, why not tell me before ? He concluded she had not really loved him, perhaps expected to make a cloak of him ; and as he was of a temper hasty and ardent, he fell, or at least seemed to do so, into a passionate contempt of her, which rendered it equally impossible for him to remain in her presence, or for her to live. He went to the continent, and was not heard of for years. At the end of that period he died ; it is supposed, of wounds, which he received at Naples. " Poor wretch that I was," said Lady Isabella, in one of her lamenting moments : " I had brought myself to a pass, in which I was thought to be incapable of love itself ; and yet I did love him, and I do. Tell him so when you see him. He might have been a little kinder, seeing that his own sex can think themselves capable of love, after taking a

licence far beyond what I did." The expectation was ill-founded, considering how men and women are brought up; but it is nevertheless very painful to see the virtues demanded of one sex, and that the most sensitive, by those who have been the least scrupulous towards it.

It happened most unfortunately, that the very night of Lady Isabella's disclosure to her lover, and only an hour or two before it took place, she had sent a message to Mrs Waring, who expected to be confined in a few days; and that the message was brought by the young Lord. Waring had confided his secret to his wife's aunt, the sister of her mother, who, not carrying her bigotry so far as the rest of the family, had taken pity on her, and invited her to her house, under pretence of the delicate state of her health. The young lady's time was approaching, and the aunt being afraid of seeing her through her trouble in her own house, had ventured on letting her pay a visit to "those good souls" Mr and Mrs Braythwaite, who had not long since commenced their kind trade in the behalf of a select portion of the nobility and gentry. The visit was to be short, lest enquiries should be made from home; and Lady Isabel's lover now came to inform the aunt, that everything was ready. Not finding the old lady at home, he was about to leave a

note, and had requested pen and ink for the purpose, of Miss Vavasour, when seeing her agitated by the mystery, and being a man of great natural openness and address, he disclosed to her, with equal delicacy and zeal, the purport of his mission. He had long been in the secret, and all knew it; for the ladies had no reserves with each other, or with their friends, though Waring regarded this unlimited confidence with less pleasure than his Lordship. Waring had no faith in the story of Lady Isabel's private marriage; and though he could not help liking her for some of her qualities, or the young Lord either, he would willingly have put an end to the intimacy, had it not existed before his own. The new circumstances also, under which he found himself, increased the difficulty of so doing. To say the truth, he was a little jealous of his Lordship's gaiety and familiarity with Miss Vavasour, though without the slightest doubt of her good faith; but his non-belief of the private marriage gave him, he thought, the greater reason to keep an eye on his Lordship's behaviour. He regarded him as a man of pleasure, who would as willingly have made love to one lady as another. He did him an injustice; but it was natural enough under the circumstances. On the other hand, the young Lord, judging of Miss Vavasour by her friend,

and not believing Waring to be nicer than himself, because he was graver, had, in the first instance, believed the marriage on their part to have had as little ceremony in it as his own. By degrees, however, as he became acquainted with her, he began to think that the case might be otherwise. Without ceasing to love Isabella, he acquired an affectionate esteem for her friend, whose intimacy with her he showed a delight in encouraging, perhaps with a view to fixing the other's volatility. It was he, also, be it observed, who had secured the beneficent services of the Braythwaites.

The two pair of lovers were in this singular position with regard to each other, when, as ill luck would have it, Waring enters the room, just as the nobleman is leaving it. The latter had taken the hand of Miss Vavasour, (*videlicet*, Mrs Waring,) to kiss it; and in doing so, he had said something so delicate, so respectful, and so full of happiness to come, both for her and her husband, that the lady, who was naturally of an enthusiastic temper, and whose feelings had been raised from a state of the greatest anxiety to one of peace and joy, felt so much gratitude in behalf of Mr Waring and herself, as to raise the hand that had taken hers to her own lips, adding, with delight in her eyes, and a charming blush, "My dear Lord, all

will be surely well, and nobody know it. You have given life to more than one."

Now Mr Waring had entered without being observed by the parties; so much had the moment absorbed them. He accordingly arrived close upon them, just as his wife had uttered these words. The lady coloured with an innocent confusion to see him; the lord, to his eyes, seemed doubly confused, especially as he made haste to leave them together; and though love and his natural generosity made him receive the explanation at first, and endeavour to rejoice in it, it rankled in his mind when he went away.

Waring's only faults were hastiness and jealousy. The former he carried to that excess, which is supposed common to Irishmen. The latter he had as a lover. He loved his wife with a sincerity and admiration, which recoiled from thinking ill of her, as an insult offered to something angelical. On the other hand, the sex was frail; the very best of them could fall into a condition like that of Lady Isabella: Isabella was his wife's friend; the nobleman was handsome, accomplished, and of a temper gayer than his own, a temper more like his wife's; and she who could be secret in one thing, not perfectly right perhaps, might be secret in another a great deal less so—that was conclusive. After a night spent in these contemplations,

he rose, went to the aunt's house, and astonished and afflicted Miss Vavasour with a burst of suspicion. The parting words that she had uttered to the young lord, and which her husband had suffered her so prettily to explain away, were now palpable evidences against her, that could only tell one way, unless she had been lost to all sense of propriety; and if such was the very alternative, why doubt the rest? Having made the charge, the very misgiving of his heart at seeing her astonished made him repeat it. He did not dare to think he could have committed such an outrage for nothing. In a bitter flood of tears, she referred him to the young lord himself. It did not enter her head, that a quarrel might ensue. Secure of her own truth, she thought that the evident sight of another's, and the astonishment he would express, would send her husband back to her, a penitent. He went, and found that the young lord had fled! Fled too the very same night, not three hours after he had witnessed his confusion, and in a state of emotion which had not escaped the notice of the persons with whom he lodged. He had suddenly given up his lodgings, and avowed his intention of not returning for some time. "The coward!" thought Waring; "the traitor and the coward! He pretended to have

love enough for two women, and did not dare to meet a second glance from a man !”

From the lodgings, our mistaken friend went to Lady Isabella's, where he found her Ladyship alarmingly ill, and unable to see anybody. The servants looked frightened, and could explain nothing. It was clear that the villain had ill-treated both his victims ; a conviction, under which the enquirer again made his appearance before his astonished wife.

The alarm evinced by the poor young lady at the intelligence of the nobleman's flight, appeared to Waring a new proof of her guilt. Had she exhibited pleasure or calmness he would have had more reason ; but when did jealousy wait for reason ? She confessed her agitation, and attributed it to fears, both for Isabella, and for the security of the arrangements respecting herself. Both these assurances, however just and natural, touched upon points, which her husband, in the excited state of his feelings, only turned to ill account. She was afraid for an unworthy woman, and she missed the man, who knew too well how such arrangements were to be secured. Miss Vavasour (I should say Waring, but I instinctively call her so in this part of the story) finished the dispute by throwing herself in the most affecting manner, on

Mr Waring's pity and good construction. She expressed her fears lest the astonishment and agitation into which his suspicions had thrown her, should do harm to the poor little creature, who, "as God was her judge, was his true and loyal babe;" and then in a flood of tears she apologised so sweetly for her plain speaking, hoping that he would not think ill of her for it, and fearing that he had had but too much reason to think her a person deficient in self-government and womanly reserve, that in a passion of love and self-reproach, poor Waring begged her pardon for his inhumanity, clasping her with renewed tenderness round the heart, and cherishing her hiding head in his bosom.

Miss Vavasour seemed to feel her life restored by this evidence of a return to reason, but the shock had hastened the approach of her time; the aunt was summoned in haste, the carriage ordered, and all three instantly departed in it for Braythwaite's, not without many comments from the servants, which, in spite of the love they bore both to the old lady and the young, were not long in reaching the ears of her parents. Mr Waring was professedly a visitor to the old lady, to whom the marriage had been disclosed when it was found impossible for the young one to remain at home; and though both had a right to be visited

by whom they pleased, and Lady Isabella had always been accompanied by her own ancient kinswoman, as well as by the young lord, who was understood to be paying his addresses to her, yet some of those evidences of closer intercourse, which are sure not to escape the eyes of the curious, had long set the critics below stairs talking. One of them had a relation in town, who was connected with a family intimate with the Vavasours: the gossip was carried round; and Miss Vavasour had scarcely returned with her aunt to the latter's house, and congratulated herself on having got well through her awful trial, when her father made his appearance, with a face pale with passion, and abruptly taxed her with having an intrigue with a Papist. The poor girl had no face for a falsehood. She could have said anything at the moment to screen her husband, for whom she felt a thousand superfluous fears; but her face conspired with her nature to betray her; and thinking that the confession of her marriage was at any rate better than being supposed guilty of an intrigue, she made use at once of that astounding vindication. The father broke for ever with the aunt for deceiving him, though she had really done it to save his feelings, and was the most harmless liar on his side of the family. At the same time, he proclaimed his daughter's shame (as he called it) to every ear that chose to listen at the

doors,—which every ear did that was able; and in less than two hours he was on the road with her to London, vowing his vengeance upon Waring for marrying against the law.

The severest enactments had been revived at that time against the Catholics, not only cutting them off from the usual privileges of society, but threatening their lives for the exercise of their worship. Miss Vavasour's father knew too well the hold he had got against Waring, especially in the terrors of his daughter; and he used both so inexorably, allowing her to write to him for that purpose, and inspecting her letters, that the poor husband, who would willingly have risked his life to do her a service, and shew his remorse for his former suspicions, could no longer support the fear of endangering hers. The father gave him the choice of having the marriage denounced, and the priest as well as himself thrown into prison to be tried for their lives, or retiring into a monastery. The poor husband, to save his wife's feelings, as well as not to do an injustice to an honest man, chose the latter alternative, and flying the country, entered himself of the Society of Jesus. As far as Waring himself was concerned, flight might have set the menace at nought. He might have left the country and still have remained free. But the priest who married them was too old to move; he already lived only

on sufferance ; and as Miss Vavasour knew this, and indeed no such mortal peril would have been risked to the old man, whether she knew it or not, Waring, to make amends by one great sacrifice for all the pain he had caused her, and to shew that he preferred her peace and family quiet to every other consideration, wrote to her from the coast of France, to say, that nobody could now suffer from any act of his, for he was wedded no longer, except to heaven and her memory. He completed the generosity of his letter by saying that she of course was able to marry again, according to the laws of her country ; and that “ as in heaven they are neither married nor given in marriage, he hoped he might deserve to see her again in the next world, without offence to any one.”

The unhappy pair endeavoured the more to reconcile themselves to their separation, because word had been written them by Lady Isabella, that their child was no more. Poor Isabel had been additionally bewildered by the misfortunes of her friends. She undertook, however, to keep an eye on the little infant for the present, and to contrive, by means of Mr Braythwaite, that the mother should see the child from time to time. A few weeks after Mrs Waring's departure, Lady Isabel was delivered of her own child, still-born. She wept bitterly at the loss, declaring neverthe-

less that it was a relief to her; but she turned sullen and hopeless, careless of what might happen; nay, she wished for death; and in the course of a few weeks it came. It was in this interval that the thought struck her of saving trouble to her friends, and securing a powerful protection for their child, by pretending it was her own, and sending word of its birth to Lord Ormond.

How this came to be known, I shall relate presently. Lady Isabella, after seeing this strange act of mingled falsehood and generosity succeed, breathed her last under circumstances that looked very like a repentance of it. But of this also, when the rest of her conduct is described. The noble Earl took charge of his supposed offspring, and after a time consigned her to the care of the good Mr Randolph, under whom she grew up to be the innocent and charming person we have described. At Mr Randolph's death, the busy Mr Braythwaite, who had sought his acquaintance, bore her for a time, at his dying desire, to his own house, to be put under the care of the virtuous Mrs B., till his Lordship's pleasure should be known. His Lordship had in the meanwhile become acquainted at Mickleham House, where he little thought he beheld the real mother of the child; and as little did he think, with what eyes she was regarding him when he ventured to ex-

press his wishes for her favour towards his protégée. The latter was, in consequence, repeatedly invited to the house; and no sooner did the ladies find that Mr Randolph, at his death, had consigned her to the care of Mr Braythwaite, than they intreated the Duke, as a favour, to let her take up her abode finally at their house. But what had been Miss Vavasour's feelings—Mrs Waring's rather—when she first beheld the girl, and instantly discerned the resemblance to her husband? Let it be confessed, that if her husband was the first to do an injustice by his suspicions, the wife was now seized with suspicions in her turn. The more she looked, the less could she persuade herself that the Duke was the real father; and the more she began to believe, that Waring himself had played false. The Duke, it is true, might have known more ladies than one; and one of them might have borne an astonishing resemblance to Mr Waring, perhaps was related to him, though he had no sisters: but Lady Isabella he had certainly known; and her poor friend was certainly as capable of stratagem. When the name of Braythwaite transpired (for Master Warmestre had by that time resumed it) her suspicions amounted almost to certainty; till one day, on a sudden, there fell upon her the less humiliating, but far more awful thought,—mixed up, she said, of the two

most opposite feelings possible,—the bitterest grief and the most transporting joy,—that the child might be her own. Her mind was so occupied with this thought, night and day, and so perplexed by it, that two illnesses succeeded; in the course of which Ellen was so filially attentive, and betrayed at every turn of her mind and manners so perfect, though feminine a likeness of her father, that she was unable to bear her society; so that, confiding her thoughts to Lady Vavasour, the latter contrived accordingly to diminish her attendance.

The circumstances that took place from this period up to that of Sir Philip's return to England, have been related. Mr Waring, out of delicacy to the Vavasours, as well as from other feelings, had never disclosed his connection with them to any one, not even his beloved pupil. He had only given Sir Philip to understand, when the latter first mentioned his admiration of Lady Vavasour, that a very painful and unexplainable circumstance in his history, though implying nothing dishonourable to any party, prevented him from hearing their names mentioned without a feeling of anguish; and the more Sir Philip guessed of the nature of this circumstance, which he did pretty nearly during his after acquaintance with them, especially from the emotion exhibited

by Lady Vavasour at the mention of his tutor's name, the more he thought himself bound never to speak of them again in his presence. Sir Philip often wondered, that his friend, though professing more regard for him than ever, and sometimes unable to look at him without tears in his eyes, did not seem to like his society as he used to do : while the latter, who in fact, knew all that the other was about, and thought him destined like himself to love without happiness, avoided him, because comfort was to be neither taken nor given. In the bitterest moments of his first separation from Miss Vavasour, or rather in those moments when he was willing, for the sake of rallying his forces, to think ill of all parts of his fortune, he sometimes endeavoured to believe, that she might have been false to him ; but this fancy was always rejected, both as a new offence, and an addition to his misfortunes. He ceased at length to struggle with his love, turning entirely to that hope of meeting in another world, which he expressed in his parting letter ; and when he found that she lived on, year after year, without forming a new connexion, and that at length, in the course of time, they seemed still communing with each other by means of one unalterable determination, he could almost have worshipped in her the likeness of his guardian saint. The mention of her name,

however, by earthly lips, always made him fall into an impatience to be reunited with her on earth, and it was because he could not bear the chance of it, nor the pressure of another Vavasour upon his friend's heart, that he was fain to be less and less in his society. Had both been of equal ages, it might have been otherwise, or had the cases been alike ;—but I have observed, more than once, that if ever reserve takes place between particular friends, it is apt to be carried further than with any other persons ; perhaps because both have a misgiving, that it ought not to be so. Lord Waringstown has since said good-humouredly, that having been Sir Philip's tutor, he had taken himself for an older and graver person than he was. He ought to have known, he says, that a lover is always young. Besides, he confessed, that he was ashamed. He did not dare to express the remorse he had been destined to experience, for being the first author of the discovery of his marriage ; for such he could never help regarding himself ; and he added, as a humiliating proof of human weakness, and what made him perpetually think ill of himself, that the absurdity of his conduct, as an absurdity, fully shared, in his mind, the remembrance of the wrong of it ; so that he was perpetually taxing himself with being equally guilty and egotistical. He had turned self-reflection, how-

ever, to one great account. He had quite conquered his impatience with others. Everybody else, however wrong or absurd, seemed to him too excusable, by some reason of education or circumstance, to warrant the arrogance of reproach; and by degrees this consideration helped to reconcile him to his conscience.

A time was now come, when reserve and reproach were to be equally at an end. It has been seen how Lord Waringstown was thrown into the company of his wife, how he beheld his daughter, and was instantly struck with her likeness to himself. He lost no time in seeking out Braythwaite, and he took him with his wife abruptly into the presence of the Duke of Ormond, where Lady Waringstown (for so she must now be called) was seated with her daughter. This took place the same day on which Sir Philip introduced me to his intended bride, and was the subject on which he expressed so much satisfaction, after making that enquiry of his Lordship when he entered the room. He had entertained little doubt of the issue, and so had the rest; but the Duke, in endeavouring to hasten the confession of the parties, met with an unexpected mortification. Being angry with them, he unfortunately opened the business with a threat; upon which Braythwaite said, that with all due respect to his Grace, that was not the way in which Mrs

Braythwaite and himself had a right to be treated; and that whatever communications they had or had not to make with others, perhaps the presence of his Grace might be unnecessary.

The Duke, doubly offended at this insolence, asked him how he dared to address him in that manner: then checking himself, and apologizing to the ladies for his warmth, proceeded to ask him some questions. Braythwaite declined to answer. He said he would not give or permit a single testimony, not only unless the threat was removed from his wife's head, but unless every decency (as he called it) was observed towards her, and due security promised her, on the faith and honour of all parties, for whatever her kindness to Lady Isabella (for it was nothing else) might have induced her at any time to venture upon. By this claim it was manifest, both that the suspicion was true, and that Braythwaite had some very powerful hold somewhere, by which he could brave so powerful a man as Ormond.

The Duke, smiling with scorn, but looking disconcerted, asked him if he was not the Braythwaite of whom he had heard, who was in close connexion with the Duke of Buckingham.

"I have a kinsman," said Braythwaite, "who has the honour to be in his Grace the Duke of

Buckingham's household ; but if your Grace would insinuate that I have need of protectors, I beg leave to say you are mistaken."

"Do you mean to answer my questions, or do you not?" enquired Ormond; "because in case you do not, perhaps the woman may think fit not to risk the danger of a worse enquiry."

"She can undergo no danger," returned Braythwaite; "there is more danger, if she is ill-used, to twenty others whom I could name, dukes and perhaps even princes included."

"Ay, ay! we come to that, do we!" said the Duke, "I thought there was a protection of some sort, though I did not exactly look for one of that kind. Good God! to think that the highest names in the land—But I shall forget myself. Suppose, Mr Braythwaite, I am not in a humour to spare the consequences of your threats, be they what they may?"

"You will spare them, to a certainty, my Lord Duke," answered the spy:—"I will answer for your wish to do so."

"Well," returned Ormond, "I am not addicted to scandals, and can waive the proof. Let us drop all talk either of threat or indemnity, and proceed to question this good woman at once."

"Pardon me, my Lord," interrupted Brayth-

waite, "I cannot consent to it. My device, for the benefit of all parties, is, and has ever been, 'Entire security, or nothing.'"

"And you venture to say this," angrily observed the Duke, "in the presence of these honourable persons!"

All his Grace's anger now seemed to return, and the ladies began to fear for the explanation; Mrs Bráythwaite creeping back to her husband out of the corner where she had stood, and planting herself doggedly beside him, when Braythwaite hastened to put an end to the delay by writing some words with a pencil, and respectfully presenting them to the Duke. The Duke read them, blushing like scarlet, in manifest amazement and agitation; then crumpling them into his pocket with a kind of uneasy scorn, said, "We will talk of this hereafter. What is required meanwhile shall be done. *That* is the great point undoubtedly." His Grace was proceeding, though with a voice still agitated, and looking away from his mysterious correspondent, to open anew the interrogations, when Braythwaite once more, though in a style of great respect, interfered, and requested that the Duke, and the other persons present, would severally pledge their honour, that no harm should come to anybody for whatever might have been thought proper to be

done. The pledge was given, and the interrogations commenced.

Mrs Braythwaite deposed, that the Lady Isabella (under what circumstances we have seen,) sent for her one morning to her bedside, looking highly flushed, and seemingly more strong and happy than usual. She alleged, that her Ladyship first swore her to secrecy, on peril of dying before her face if she refused; and then opened to her for the sake of her friends, a plan by which the Earl of Ormond was to be declared father of the child. The lady was to write and subscribe a paper to that effect, Mr Braythwaite being called in as an additional witness, though he was not to be let into the secret. This paper was to be sent to the Earl, and if he acknowledged the truth of it, the child was to be treated according to his directions, both then and afterwards; always provided,—1st. That she should be allowed to inherit from her supposed mother, a certain sum, which the latter possessed as her private property: and 2ndly, That if any evil should ever threaten the real father and mother, in consequence of the loss of the child, or any circumstances whatsoever took place, by which it would be advisable to inform them of its existence, she, Anne Braythwaite, as she was to answer it before God on the last day, was, upon good promise of security against any responsibility for what

was past, openly and fully to declare all she knew upon the matter, one jot or one tittle not excepted. And Anne Braythwaite further confessed, though she stated she had been freed by Lady Isabella from any necessity to that effect, that a fifth of the said property had been settled in perpetuity on herself, provided the Earl's acknowledgment of the child was obtained before her Ladyship's death.

Whether there was truth in every word of this statement, could not be ascertained; but the paper was sent; the child (though not without some trouble and alarm) was acknowledged; and Mrs Braythwaite averred, that she neither had lost sight of the parties concerned, ever since the young lady had been consigned to the care of her supposed kinsman, Mr Randolph, nor had she seen any reason, till application was made to her by Lord Warings-town, for putting into execution the disclosure enjoined her by Lady Isabel. Mr Braythwaite, she said, had made the acquaintance of Mr Randolph on purpose to gratify her, by witnessing the comfort of the dear young lady with his own eyes; and after the death of the old gentleman, she had the satisfaction of having her under her own roof for a short time, at his express dying desire, till my Lord should dispose of her as he thought fit. She then had the new and singular pleasure of seeing her become an inmate in the house of her real mo-

ther, to whom she would have disclosed herself as her nurse, had not the likeness of the young lady to Mr Waring made her fearful of impressing it too strongly upon her mother, and indeed prepared her for the escape of the secret before long, should Miss Vavasour have so wished; which, however, she confessed she had not looked for.

"Mrs Waring," sternly said the Duke of Ormond, "*not* Miss Vavasour. You are to remember, that this lady was a wedded wife. Was not Lady Isabella aware of this circumstance?"

Mrs Braythwaite here fell into tears, partly perhaps from agitation, partly from tenderness of recollection. "My fears then were true," said she, "and the poor lady knew it."

"What fears?" enquired the Duke.

Mrs Braythwaite said, that she herself had never been certain till then, of Miss Vavasour's being a wedded wife, nor, she believed, had Lady Isabella, till the very day of her death. Her Ladyship might have been told of it, but certainly had not given it credit. On that day a letter came from Mrs Waring, in answer to the one announcing the pretended death of her child. Lady Isabella contrived to read it, and it affected her so strongly, that upon Mrs Braythwaite returning to the room, (for her kindred had not removed her from the house,) she found her at once speechless, and labouring to utter

something, which, by the look of her countenance, was very particular. She pointed to the letter, which Mrs Braythwaite accordingly read, but could gather nothing from it. She recollected, however, a passage, which she now conceived to have made the strong impression under which her Ladyship attempted to speak; but it was so worded, that it conveyed to herself no impression at the moment, though something to the effect had occasionally struck her afterwards. It was something to this purpose:—‘God be praised that he has left me the hope of meeting her hereafter—of meeting all, for Mr Waring writes to tell me, that we shall all meet, if we trust in God’s mercy; and you know that my beloved husband never did an action in his life which obscured the sense of his duties, or hindered him from seeing by their blessed light.’—I know,” continued Mrs Braythwaite, “that the ladies spoke of Mr Waring and my lord, by the title of their husbands; and though I thought it was a strange thing of Miss Vavasour to say what she did of Mr Waring, yet the name by which she called him did not strike me at the moment as being part of the strangeness.”

The Duke of Ormond looked as if he doubted this assertion, but he made no comment upon it; he only said, “Poor lady! she saw she had mistaken in everything, and doubtless wished to

undo the arrangements respecting the child. Did she say nothing afterwards?"

"Not a word," replied our informant: "she was not able: the doctor gave her cordials, but she never spoke a word more. She shook her head angrily, when I asked if I was to do this and that with the letter, and made other signs of impatience, but soon became weaker and weaker, dropping her head back, and so gave up the effort. Only the tears ran in a very piteous manner out of the sides of her eyes, till the moment she departed; and I saw something laboured at her heart, which she had not been able to tell me."

The great and gallant Duke of Ormond shed tears himself at the close of this recital; and even Mr Braythwaite ejaculated something moving. The case, however, was now concluded. It was clear enough. His Grace congratulated Lord Waringstown on the establishment of his claim, saying something very kind and agreeable upon the transfer of it from himself; and then, desiring Mr Braythwaite to follow him to his house, the parties separated; and his Lordship came away to Sir Philip's lodgings, where I met him, as related.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT morning I had the pleasure of embracing my beloved Ellen, who was in such a transport of pleasure, that she was in a state of almost breathless quiet the whole day, scarcely knowing how to reply to us. However, she repaid us by looks. Lady Waringstown had brought her with them from Mickleham over night, having been summoned by an express. Her Ladyship was almost as quiet, but preserved her wits, and was half the day engaged in whispering in corners with her lord, making, she said, no apologies for her want of politeness. I could see, that their discourse concerned more than themselves, for they often stopped to regard both of us, as they sat talking apart; and every now and then, Ellen would go and sit between them, each of them holding one of her hands. She had entertained great respect for the Duke of Ormond, but sometimes reproached

herself that it was not so filial as it might have been. In fact, he saw her rarely, and that with little willingness ; and this she could not but perceive. When he now saw her, he behaved in a manner equally unconstrained and affectionate, saying he hoped she would not cease to love him, "for that any man might be proud of her regard." She kissed his hand, with more tears than he had ever drawn from her before : and he was much affected.

The day following I witnessed an extraordinary scene at court. It was my business that morning to attend on his Majesty, which I did with great impatience, longing to return to my friends. I returned sooner than I expected, and in company with Sir Philip. The Duke of Ormond had been right in his conjecture respecting Buckingham. Herne was in town three days before he saw me, and during the whole of that time had endeavoured in vain to meet with him, both at court and at York House. He wrote, and what he wrote was very much to the purpose ; but no answer was sent. Buckingham had been requested by his Majesty to keep the peace ; and he kept it like the apple of his eye. On the third day, Arran undertook to speak with his Grace on the subject. Buckingham affected the utmost astonishment ; said that he had received the letter, but taken

it for a bad joke ; that he would not have endured the suspicion from any other man, and begged him to tell as much to Sir Philip ; adding, that he heartily congratulated our friend on his escape from those " accursed vagabonds ;" but that he did not believe even Dalton to be concerned in the matter, having no doubt that it was a pure design on Sir Philip's purse. As to Dalton, or Blood, as I shall in future call him, there had been half-a-dozen warrants out against him a year past, and yet he was nowhere to be found.

It was Buckingham's turn that day to be in waiting. He had slept, or rather gone to bed a few hours before, in the room next to that of his Majesty ; and was complaining to a French gentleman, who came from the Duchess of Orleans, of the early hours of the King, whom he called the " morning star and garter," when up comes the Duke of Ormond, and begs his Majesty's permission to present to him, in that private manner, their " gallant Rouen acquaintance, Sir Philip Herne, newly come from beyond seas."

The King, who had evidently been told the story, looked very awkward. He mustered up, however, one of his kindest faces, and gave Sir Philip a good welcome. The worst of it was, he was obliged to say something. There was a silence by no means common in the royal presence, even

upon the most solemn occasions. I stole a look at Buckingham, who was very busy, explaining in whispers to the French gentleman who Sir Philip was. "This is a very scandalous business," quoth the King; "enquiry must be made into it. I must speak to Coventry and Arran about it, and to my brother: we must all see about it, and put an end to those villains. They are more disgrace to us than Algiers! Odsfish! my Lords," continued his Majesty, looking around him, "'tis too great an indignity, thus removing the most honourable men in England by main force, and demands an apology from us for enduring such ruffians." He looked very angry, which he probably was, at being reminded that he had the "ruffians" about him. Buckingham whispered faster than ever to the French Count. Sir Philip, who had been asked no questions, could only bow his thanks.

The King, as Ormond foresaw he would, took his Lord Lieutenant by the button, and led him to a window. Ormond did not like the office he had taken upon himself, and Sir Philip had earnestly requested him to let somebody else perform it. But with that pertinaciousness in what he thought proper, which was not always so agreeable as he took it to be, he had resolved to go through with it, because he thought himself bound in honour to stand by his "Rouen acquaintance." Sir Philip

was surrounded by a host of enquirers and condolers, not of the most pleasant description. He well understood, however, the position into which he had brought himself, and proceeded to turn the tables upon his misfortune in the following manner. After making a general and somewhat repelling bow round about him, he went straight up to Buckingham, whose hand he declined :—

“ My Lord Duke of Buckingham,” said he, in a tone low enough to escape the King’s ear, but loud enough to be heard by the rest—“ it is necessary, in the eyes of the world, to thrust aside the disadvantage to which you have put me, and I now do it accordingly. ’Tis you that were at the bottom of this villainy. You may affect to smile, for you do but affect it. Remember, that I know you,—that I know you, and that I know your friend, the outlaw,” (Buckingham looked alarmed,) “ and your friends, the other outlaws, who would have committed the same outrage on a person whose name I will not mention, lest it should compromise your responsibility to myself. I shall mention no names at present, but your own; nor the rest at any time, if you choose to take upon yourself to answer for them; but in mentioning yours, I give this honourable company to understand, that I mention that of a traitor and a ruffian.”

“ Do you recollect, Sir Madman, in whose pre-

sence you are speaking?" said Buckingham, lifting up his voice.

"I do," contemptuously answered Sir Philip, "and so does your Grace."

"Gad!" quoth the Viscount, who stood near me, "he has him hip and thigh." The Frenchman was writing like mad in his tablets, staring all the while at the sensation he should make in Louis's awful court. *

"What is this?" said the King, returning: "remember my injunction, gentlemen; are we never to have peace and quiet? Here, at least, I may expect that they shall be found; and I desire they may be so. No more of these ruffling absurdities. You know I have desired it."

"Your Majesty then," said Buckingham, "must really contrive to put an end to these eternal and infernal mistakes, or who is to endure them? The next thing will be to accuse—"

"No, Buckingham, it will *not*," sternly interrupted the King;—"Peace! and let me hear no more on't. Ormond, you might have spared me this;—but no matter. Sir Philip Herne, I have expressed my concern at your treatment. I had

* Lord Ossory, though a pattern of behaviour, afterwards stood upon still less ceremony than Sir Philip. See p. 340. —*Edit.*

hoped it might have sufficed, seeing that we all suffer for mistakes in our turn."

"Sir," answered Sir Philip, with a subjection and tenderness of manner exceedingly graceful, "I am bounden to your Majesty beyond what I can express, for permitting me to utter my thanks for your Majesty's gracious treatment of me. What I have been saying to the Duke of Buckingham was a private matter, not intended for your Majesty's ear; nor should I have whispered it in this place, could I have found any other. Had I posted my Lord Duke on the walls of London, (as I confess I had thoughts of doing,) I might have been put to my proofs in a court of justice; and as witnesses can be kept out of the way, and many delicate privacies might have been compromised, I had therefore—"—"Consider them now," hastily interrupted the King; "consider them now; and pray let us have no more of it. Look'ye, Sir Philip,—our dignity is concerned; the public must hear no more of these scandals, whether founded in truth or mistake; and I charge you all, on your loyalty, to say no more about them. God's my life, must I ask such a thing in vain, and purely for the public good!"

"Sir," replied my friend, "if I did not interrupt your Majesty, it was because I feared I had

already ventured too many words. My honour, I conceive, is saved. The rest I lay at your Majesty's feet, submissive and grateful."

The King blushed, as if he had asked too much; and Sir Philip, as if he thought so. There was some little confusion among us all, and we mingled and talked, without knowing well what to say. His Majesty retired again with the Duke of Ormond. It was easy to see what was thought, though few persons ventured to congratulate my friend openly. Shall I dare to say, that even I hesitated to be among the foremost? Ossory was the first, and then Arran; and I was surprised to find Sedley very warm; but he had a large estate. I hope it will be considered, that I was Page of the Presence; and that it is easier to encounter plague, pestilence, and famine, than hazard a king's displeasure, especially when a man has been used to the contrary. However, I knew I should go at last. The thought of my new expectations (confound them!) came in aid of my virtue; and I was time enough to anticipate Sir Charles.*

I owned my weakness to Sir Philip when we came away. "Do you not know," said he, "that it is for this candour we all love you, and that you

* Sedley, just mentioned.—*Edit.*

could not have it, if you had not the weakness? If you come to that, I flatter myself I have been as weak as you."

"How!" said I; "had you any weakness on the occasion?"

"Had I not!" cried he, in a pleasant tone—"Oh, good lord! I suspect people will begin to love me too, when they know all,—that is to say, if I have not too much to confess."

"What did you feel then?" I enquired.

"Why," returned Sir Philip, "did you not see what a lie I told, when I said I was not only submissive but grateful? and did you not observe how pale I was? Nay, it was no lie; it was baser; for I really felt grateful, and could have kissed the royal feet, purely because sovereign power smiled on me, and asked me a favour. Oh, I shall have a perilous notion of a king in future. I shall be inclined to a republic, purely because I resent my courtly propensities."

"I saw no courtliness," said I, "beyond what it should have been; but I chuckled to see how pale you were with passion. There I had you."

"You will have me worse," observed Sir Philip, "when you find it was not with passion I was pale,—at least not with anger."

"What was it then?"

I had now another occasion to admire those qua-

lities in my friend, which at the very moment they appeared to place him beneath us, set him more assuredly above, and yet under such circumstances as could hardly have rendered it possible for him to think so. In fact, I could perceive by his voice, that he was much agitated, as he made me the following extraordinary reply :—

“ It was with fear.”

“ With fear ! What fear ? ”

“ Fear of my own feelings, and of Buckingham, and of the necessity I should be under of facing that great baby in the field. He is a human being ; and the idea of encountering a human face in hostility, with all its mysteries of life, and death, and suffering, is very dreadful to me. I am courageous enough in principle, and can do anything for it ; but I am all fear in imagination : I may add, all sympathy. We are all creatures of circumstances ; at least I am willing to think so for my own sake ; and if the greatest scoundrel in existence should profess to be indignant, and to think I wronged him, I should hardly feel certain that I had not. Even Blood, I understand, thinks he has been wronged by mankind, and probably was so formerly ; and he was vulgarly and violently brought up. The cast of Buckingham’s face is amiable, for all his infamous actions. He has been ruined by being a duke while an infant. You may undertake

to think all this a refinement that does me honour, and will infallibly try to think so; but you will *not* think it; at least not every part of it: it is, perhaps, not desirable that you should; at any rate, that the world at large should; or they might confound the grace of truth with the right of being weak and unhealthy. But there is no danger of that; nor should I hazard it, if there were. I have done nothing to warrant my being such a martyr."

"Do you remember the sea-fight," said I, unable to enter upon these metaphysics then, as I might now.

"That alters nothing of what I have observed," answered Sir Philip: "I tell you I can do anything for a principle; and as I have had the luck to be tried more than once, I am safe with those who know what I have done. The world perhaps would not easily believe me capable of fear, were it not for the multitude of those who are secretly fearful themselves; who, by the way, would be the first to try if they could not beard me, which would be inconvenient for all parties. 'Tis well for all, that they do not know how difficult I find it to be angry. This it is to be educated in so much tenderness of conscience! I am bound not to regret it, for I think the world would be happier if they had more. I mean, as it affects one another. But grievously are those mistaken, who think such results of the substitution of practical for theoretical

goodwill, make a man the prouder. They no more do so, than they ought to do so. The making a point of consideration of others begets a real tenderness for them, and a positive undervaluing of one's-self, inconceivable to those who think it a proud thing to do right. What will you say to me, Esher, when I confess to you, that the 'turning of many thoughts,' as the old poet has it, has made me either so Christian a philosopher, or so contemptible an adversary, that it was with difficulty I roused myself to seek for these men; nay, to feel angry with them. They appeared to me like great, mischievous stupid boys, and I as a great child to whom nothing but chance had given other thoughts. And what fault was that of theirs? So unfit am I for action. Confess, that you think me fitter for a cloister than a quarrel."

"You know what I think of you, Herne," said I; "but I own you do surprise me when you say, that you have scarcely felt even angry." I thought of Lady Vavasour, of what he now knew of her situation, and of Blood's attempt; and I indeed wondered.*

* What Sir Ralph wondered at will be thought by most a feeling out of nature; but I must confess I have had unquestionable proofs of its existence, and know a person who so far answers to the character described. We are too apt to take it for granted from certain writers, that nothing is human nature but what they have laid down for

“The reason is,” observed my friend, “that I find all men, as I have said before, to be the creatures of circumstances, and that I have had passions and impulses go through my own breast, under the madness of which I know not into what crimes I might have fallen.”

“You jest!”

“I am serious. Circumstances have been very serious with me, and shewn me visions and experiences of humanity, under which I could not think ill of others, without implicating all human nature. Now, after all, I think well enough of myself, not to be able to think human nature a bad thing, if circumstances be favourable; and so the veriest scoundrels appear to me no worse than a parcel of great school-boys, who have had bad teachers, or some other unfavourable mischance in life: and hence it is, that I go, even to a work like the present, with no better opinion of myself than as being as great a boy as the rest, who is

it. The world has succeeded in bullying them into the opinion, and they keep it up by bullying the world. It would be a rash thing to take up the finest works that ever were written, and say that human nature is only what those works represent, or that it will come to nothing else. There are fashions on great scales as well as small, which last for hundreds of years; and many opinions, laid down for unalterable, may partake of them.—*Edit.*

obliged to fight, lest the others should think ill of him."

"You do not, however, seem to have bestowed much thought upon it, till this moment."

"I put off the thought, because it was disagreeable. I have told you what I think with regard to the human face: so I turn my thoughts another way, and do the thing which I have most reprov'd in others,—act against what appears to be my better knowledge. But 'tis a trick of sympathy, like all the rest. I mean, that whether we act for or against what we think good for others, a value for the opinion of the world is somehow or other at the bottom of it. It is this, that will be the salvation of mankind, if ever they come to see right. Meantime the world must spin round: things must proceed with health and vigour, or action would cease in us all, and put a stop to the very improvements that may be hoped in it."

"I tell you what, Sir Philip," said I; "I think you had a pretty good proof of my sincerity just now; and I declare before God, that I believe you under-rate yourself in this matter, out of some subtle refinement. Do not I know very well, that if we were attacked this very minute, you would be cut piece-meal for me before my face."

"I am glad," answered my friend with a sigh,

“that you know it; and we will say no more. I was made what I am, strong or weak; and I have still a friend. Still a friend! How many friends have I not! Truth will, I believe, cost me nothing with them. It ought not; for it has cost me dreadfully elsewhere.”

It was the first time he alluded to Lady Vavasour. How it made me long to speak! I was too deeply moved, however, by the extraordinary being beside me, to know what to utter; and during my return home, we hardly spoke a word.

I said to myself, “this man ought to have a dozen persons to fight for him, purely to save him trouble. I’ll fight with Buckingham, if I can contrive it; I’ll fight with Blood, with the Buccaneer, with everybody. God-zounds, will true Christianity never get on?”

CHAPTER XIV.

I COULD not get rid of the thoughts and emotions described in my last chapter. I felt that I should burst out somehow or other. I did, and the consequences were important.

Lady Waringstown next morning took all the ladies to herself for the whole day, to carry them about to places of female resort, shops and others, which, to say the truth, she was about as glad to see again as themselves. The Hortons undertook to escort them, I mean the female Hortons; and no gentleman was admitted of their crew. Sir Philip did not complain, but was observed to be restless. At length he ordered his horse. Lord Waringstown had left us, to have another meeting with Mr Braythwayte.

“ You would be with the ladies, Sir Philip ? ”

“ No,” said he quietly ; “ but I really do not know what to do with myself.”

"Oh, these men of truth!" thought I: "I shall make him confess anything, if I please. I know something of the way in which they hamper themselves, by hampering nothing." "What," resumed I, "are there parks, friends, the mall, the bowling-green, and the wits, and Sir Philip welcome everywhere, and not know what to do with himself?"

He said nothing, and I thought looked at me reproachfully. I could not stand this. In truth, I felt that I ought not to beguile anything out of him; especially as he loved me for my sincerity: so I spoke out.

"Allow me to ask you a plain question, my dear friend."

"You will furnish me," said he, "with something to do."—He little thought what was coming.

"You know, my dear Herne, I have been living in the court ever since you saw me, and so have not improved in modesty; but I hope you have not forgotten, that Miss Hamilton is dying for you. To be sure, she is very lively just now, hearing of your safe return, but as mortal as can be for all that. She always was dying, is dying, and die she will, when you are married."

I saw that his usual address failed him at this impromptu; and it struck me, that my words did not imply sufficient consideration for the love that was

at his heart. He said, "You remind me that when one is out of spirits, one ought to joke. It was a lesson, I remember, I was formerly enabled to teach you. Come, if Miss Hamilton is dying for me, how many Phillises will hang themselves, when Sir Ralph Esher plays the Demophoon?"

"Do you call that a joke?" said I. "Now I am not so hard-hearted as you considerate men. I always thought that there was nothing cruel, which they could not contemplate."

"It was no joke, I allow," returned Sir Philip, "except upon the principle of extremes meeting; and then an execrably bad jest, you know, amounts to a good one. Fleckno is as good as Marvell, if you want to laugh."

"I must not feign any longer," said I, a little gravely; "I did not mean to end with jesting, though I began with it. In plain truth, dear Herne, since you honour me with the title of your friend, and I know what you think belongs to that word, you will not wonder if I long to see you as happy as possible; and let me dare to say, that charming as I find Miss Earlom, and sincere, as I have no doubt, the love is that she entertains for you, I doubt sometimes whether you will be happy with her. Pardon me—I know all that you would say, and for God's sake do not think I am probing you with the common cruelty of a gossip; I am sure you do not;

—but what I mean is, that it is possible she might, in the long run, prefer the love of a heart that would love her more (you will do me justice when I say that), while on the other hand, she might shudder to find out that she had never made you happy.”

Sir Philip’s countenance underwent an inconceivable expression of melancholy kindness. He said, “I thank you for this, Ralph; you ease my mind by speaking; for everybody has kept such a silence (which indeed I do not wonder at), that I seemed as if I ought to say nothing to my own heart. Now I tell you this:—You know all,—respecting one matter. It is now as it ever was, and ever will be. But as to happiness, I have come to the conclusion, that few people have it in this world; and that if it fall to anybody’s lot to bestow it, or to be thought essential to the happiness of another, it is a lot that many thousands might envy. I am restless just at this moment; I am not well; I have never quite recovered the effects of the sickness which this charming creature, as you justly call her, enabled me to get through; and you will be surprised to hear perhaps, what indeed not a little surprises me, that although what I just now spoke of is as it was ever, I have really a great affection for Miss Earlom. I feel an inexpressible gratitude for the affection she bears me; and gratitude is a very delightful sensation.”

“That may be,” said I, “and yet neither be happy in the course of years. Allow me to ask, even on her own account, why the marriage need be hastened so speedily as this old gentlewoman says it has been determined. Miss Earlom may not agree with Miss Hamilton after all; she may find others more to her liking, when she is to see us all in our gallantry;—a thing, let me tell you, Sir Philip, which you have too little considered. Your coat, for instance, is not the perfect thing it ought to be; and let me add, that charming as the young lady is, and witty as well as handsome, very witty and handsome ladies prefer a wit like the Viscount * in a perfect coat, to his betters in one of less pretensions. Why not, in generosity give her time? I do not care for giving a rub to your vanity.”

“My dear Ralph,” answered my friend, smiling, “it is very proper that you should talk to me in this way; but you will allow it would not be quite so easy for me to debate such questions, much less to suggest them to the persons concerned. What would you have?” continued he with a sigh. “You have my interest at heart;—well, is it not a great thing to be loved at all, much more by one so kind

* I guess this Viscount to have been Sir George Hewit, who may have been promoted since we first knew him.—*Edit.*

and so beautiful? Is it not my interest to secure her, before she is subjected to those temptations **you** speak of? She has hitherto lived out of the world; she knows nothing at present of a wish to live in the world you speak of; and though I shall not debar her from it, meanwhile, I persuade myself, I shall fix her love for me beyond recal. It may be done surely with one so loving and so good; and then if I am not happy, I shall not deserve to be so. Observe me, Esher; it is well for me that I am loved at all; 'tis surely a piece of great good fortune, and such I ought to consider it—I am not a man to be loved by those who have mixed more with society. They acquire a sort of respect for me, which it becomes very difficult to bear on either side, because it gets mixed with contempt. I mean contempt for the man who so differs with the world, and who has nothing to shew them for his reasons but a premature and forced sensibility. which compelled him to think. How can I be sure that they are not in the right, and that the difference implies rather a want of energy on my part, than a defect on their own? Many excellent natures, sooner or later, fall in with arts and expediences; and what right have I to reproach them with the pedantry of my scruples? I shall retain the scruples, perhaps because I have not strength to throw them off; but they have long made me feel as if I belonged to some other planet

than this earth: some sluggish and less energetic orb; and I am, at all events, so little fitted for the orb I live in, that this feeling, the most melancholy of my existence, would be infallibly construed by all but one person in a million, into an egotism the most egotistical. Let me be loved, for God's sake, my dear friend, where I can. You know not,—for your childhood was lucky,—what it is to love and to be despised. Even now this moment, while I say it" (and he spoke with a kind of vehement self-resentment, his whole frame trembling with emotion)—"even now, you yourself sitting there, a man full of natural wisdom and tenderness, cannot help feeling a pity for me, something allied to scorn. If you were to tell my story in a book, the reader would feel it. If you were to tell it to the best and loveliest, or meekest, or most energetic of women, they would all—you know it—For God's sake ——" The rest of the sentence died on my ear.

He uttered half this speech, and particularly the latter part of it, with a vehemence, so unlike his usual manner, that my breath was for the moment suspended. At his first utterance of the word "scorn," I laughed; at the second I began to recover my surprise; and when he said "you know it," I could not help bursting out in my turn.

"I know it *not*, Sir Philip," said I, rising, with vehemence in my turn; "and you will force me to

“speak. I say I know to the contrary. You think I mean Miss Earlom, or Miss Waring, or Lady Waringstown; but I do not, though you know well the deep and admiring affection which the two latter have for you, as well as the first. Methinks these mysteries have been carried far enough; and for my part, I will speak out, let who will suffer. Better one person should suffer than two, and a new friend than an old. Lady Vavasour loves you.”

I will not attempt to describe the effect of this communication. Sir Philip turned pale and motionless, grasped the back of the chair by which he was standing, then quietly turned it and sat down, then rose immediately and met me.

“’Tis as true,” said I, “as there is a God in heaven.”

“What were the words you spoke?” said my friend, “do not be afraid that I shall commit any extravagance.”

“Lady Vavasour—Margaret—loves you; she sought you out; she bitterly repented. She went into London for you; into the thick of the plague; and would have done twenty times more, had she not discovered that it was needless. She went to the coast of France, and lived there, at the time you were away; because the document you sent from the vessel, said that it would return to that quarter.”

“Let us talk of this,” said my friend, in a voice like a whisper, putting his arm in mine, and proceeding to leave the room. “Why was I not told it before?”

He spoke so quietly, and yet, at the same time, appeared so bewildered, proposing too to leave the house, for which I saw no reason, that I began to fear the news had been too much for his state of health.

I said, that God only knew why such a mystery was made of it; and yet, on reflection, it was doubtless because of his new engagement. I had instinctively kept the secret myself hitherto, but I admired, I had such a regard for the Countess myself, that Miss Earlom, much as I admired her too, must forgive me, if the old friend prevailed in my heart over the new.

“This is just,” returned Sir Philip, “but not the less so was the other. I had forgotten what I asked.”

He spoke in a low tone quietly; but as if he was at the very end of his breath. We quitted the house, leaving our horses at the door, where mine had stood before Sir Philip’s was ordered. I now saw, that his object in coming out was to walk in the fresh air, for he only turned into the next street, and so paced up and down. I then related everything that had happened for the last four

years. Sir Philip (I did not once look at him) listened profoundly, only moving his arm a little now and then with a convulsive motion, and heaving sighs that appeared the collected breath of his attention. I concluded with saying that Lady Vavasour was ill. For the first time he pulled his hat over his eyes, then said quietly, "Let us return."

We returned into the house, the servants begging to know, as we passed, whether we meant to ride. I mechanically said "Yes," and bade them wait. When we got up stairs, Sir Philip went for a short time into the next drawing-room, and I guessed by his looks when he returned, that he had been weeping. He said however, with a smile, "There are worlds of things, which you must think for me. I cannot say them. I have ordered some refreshment, and then we will take horse."

I looked at him inquiringly.

"Do you doubt," said he, "whither we shall go. We will take some bread and wine first, and then I shall know whether it be night or day—this year or ten years ago." He then asked me some questions upon minute points, which I had omitted, and after the refreshment appeared, suddenly dropped the subject.

"'Tis a fine passage in the Bible," said he, as he poured out one glass after another, somewhat alarmingly, "where David takes food again, the

moment his son is dead. You recollect, he could do nothing before, but weep and pray."

I thought this a singular remark, as he rightly guessed. "You are surprised," said he, "at what I say; but David refreshed himself for new tasks, and so do I. I could neither bear else the joy or the sorrow, that is mixed with it."

"There will be no sorrow mixed up with it," said I, though my heart misgave me as I spoke, and I half repented what I had done.

"And I am a new man," pursued my friend, "and the world and I are reconciled in the best manner, for I will be no longer cut off from them. I will be as happy and as penitent as they, and endeavour to mix up right and wrong. Forgive my wild babbling, Esher; but I am so full of joy, that I feel for nobody. In truth, words are mere words with me just now. Come, let us go."

We took horse, and in a few hours were at Mickleham Park.

CHAPTER XV.

I WENT in first, to see what was going on. Everybody cried out, "Here is Sir Ralph Esher!" and in a few moments old Mr Bennett appeared, shaking his head, which was become a little palsied. "Is my Lady better?" said I. "No, dear Sir Ralph," answered the good man, "she is not indeed. She was not worse than common when my lady the Viscountess went, and Miss Randolph; but they had not been gone many hours, when she fainted, and she has had another fainting fit but now. She will not have the doctor, and Mrs Susan says she will die. The Lord be good unto us. I was just thinking of sending for my lady Viscountess back again."

"Do not do that," said I. "A word in your ear, my friend (moving with him towards his room); Sir Philip Herne is here."

"Who, sir?" exclaimed Bennett, turning back.

instantly, and staring about for him. I left the old gentleman hobbling after me, and fetched my friend out of the park, where he stood leaning on his horse, with his face away from the mansion, and apparently wrapped up in thought. I tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "Lady Vavasour is a little worse to-day, but it is only fainting. Perhaps she has seen us from the window." I said this to diminish the shock, as he was likely to find her worse than we looked for.

We met Bennett on the steps, together with a parcel of servants, most of whom knew the stranger, and hailed him with joy. A silent greeting passed between him and the old man, in the shape of a close pressure of the hands; and Mrs Susan coming down at that minute into the hall, fairly kissed him, shrieked, clapped her hands, and was running up again to give her mistress another fit, when I pulled her back. Lady Vavasour, with a sweet ostentation of penitence, which would have been as indelicate on most occasions as it was on the rarest side of delicacy in hers, had let the secret of her love and sorrow transpire to the household, "that they might know," she said, "what an injury she had done them, and how sorry she was for it."

"Stop a minute, Susan," said I, "I shall not trust you. The housekeeper, with her staid face, must go in first. She must tell my lady that Sir

Ralph Esher is come, and that he has brought her news which she will be glad to hear." Susan was held by main force betwixt laughing and crying; and Mrs Jeffs went up stairs. The servants had respectfully retreated. Sir Philip and myself, with my Lady's maid, went into the room of the old steward.

Sir Philip paced the steward's room as pale as a sheet, occasionally addressing a smiling answer to the old man, whom I endeavoured to keep in conversation, but who could not help addressing his former friend, proffering all sorts of wines, and asking the same questions about his health. Mrs Susan was called away, and I began to be alarmed. Presently I was called. I went and found Lady Vavasour reclining on the sofa, Mrs Jeffs standing by her side. She held out her hand to me in her usual cordial manner, and said, "There is a stranger below, but nothing, I hear, has happened to your friends. You must make your companion welcome, Sir Ralph, and excuse me for the present. The loss of Miss Randolph and my aunt has made me weak, but I shall be better shortly." As she said this, the colour began to fail from her lips, and Mrs Jeffs feared another fainting fit. She consigned her to the care of Susan, who happened to come into the room again, and went down stairs. Poor Susan stared and trembled as if she did not

know what to be at, but I motioned her not to speak. Bennett told me, that when Mrs Jeffs went down, she said she thought it necessary to put my lady to bed, and send for the physician.

"Have you done so," hastily inquired Sir Philip.

"No."

"Then wait." He now, with the energy natural to him on such occasions, decided upon one of his strong measures, and calling for pen and ink, wrote a note, which he desired might be given to the Countess that instant.

"This instant, sir!" asked Mrs Jeffs—"without any more notice?"

"This instant: you do not know her as I do." Mrs Jeffs went away with the billet, very little pleased.

She came in, humming and hawing and looking mysterious. "Sir Philip, sir," she whispered, "has given me a paper for my lady, but perhaps we had better wait a little.—" "If you don't give it her, I will;" said I. The housekeeper instantly forestalled me and presented it.

I shall never forget Lady Vavasour's manner when she saw the handwriting. She altered her careless look into one of intense eagerness, then rising a little, and at the same time dropping her head and putting her hand on her heart, as if to

gain strength, she turned her face slowly towards me as if for encouragement. I smiled, and made a sign accordingly. Perceiving then for the first time that the superscription was wet, she again looked at me, with eyes wide open, and a sudden flush in her cheeks, inconceivably beautiful. I again made a sign of acquiescence. At this, she slowly, but with an air of firmness, opened the note, which ran thus:—

“Dearest Lady Vavasour — beloved Margaret—I am here; and it is necessary to my peace that I should see you. P. H.”

Lady Vavasour, the note trembling in her hand, rose from her inclining posture by the help of my arm and Susan’s, and sat steadily on the sofa, telling Mrs Jeffs at the same time, that she was ready to “have the honour” of seeing the “writer of that letter.” She could not utter the words Sir Philip.

Bennett said, that when the housekeeper came back to them with this message, Sir Philip had been sitting down wonderfully tranquil. Mrs Jeffs, with the exception of substituting Sir Philip Herne for the “writer of the letter,” repeated the message with astonishment in her looks, adding that her ladyship was sitting up on the sofa as if nothing had happened. The tears suffused Sir Philip’s eyes at the beautiful cere-

moniousness of the "honour of seeing" him. He arose with as much tranquillity as he had been sitting, and in a minute we saw him enter.

The Countess rose, as Sir Philip came in, and quitting our hands would have made a courtesy as to her sovereign lord; but the colour which had flushed into her cheeks, as suddenly forsook her, and endeavouring to murmur something, she would have dropped before his face, had he not caught her. Sir Philip motioned for air, and seating her on the sofa, she lay with her head on his arm, his face regarding hers with an expression, which I respected too much to do more than glance at.

"I thought how it would be," said Mrs Jeffs, "my Lady has fainted again."

"She will be better presently, I warrant," angrily whispered Susan, "if you let her alone;" and the good girl wept heartily.

I thought we might as well leave the lovers together, (for I would not allow myself to think of them in any other light): so, to the astonishment and delight of Susan, I began with leading the crabbed old housekeeper out of the room, gracing my dismissal however, with begging her to see to some luncheon for me, as I was enormously hungry. She gave me a look as much as to say, "You're a pretty gentleman, to be thinking of eating at such a time." I then turned, and mo-

tioned to Susan that she might safely quit her mistress's side, which she was heartily willing to do, as Lady Vavasour had now come to herself. On recovering from her faintness she had again attempted to express something,—Susan thought, by way of apology for finding herself so near the betrothed of another lady, and being unable to move; but the “sweet gentleman,” quoth Susan, “seized her hand, and pressed it to his heart, as who should say, ‘This warrants you.’ And I warrant my Lady thought so, for she let him do what he pleased, as if it was for him to say what was right or wrong, she trembling all the while, and with her eyes cast down; so that, if it wasn’t improper for a body to stay, when true love is going on, I could have looked and cried at ’em for ever.”

For my part, I did not venture to look at all; but leading Susan forth, who told me all this on the landing place, I could not help kissing her there for her pretty crying face; upon which she said “Oh don’t!” and kissed me as heartily in her turn.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was nearly two hours before Sir Philip made his appearance in the room where I was keeping my post. He was still in a state of exaltation, but tranquil in his words; only he thanked me every now and then with great fervour, and said I had saved the most precious of lives. He did not propose to return to London, nor did I. I had left word for our friends where to seek for us, together with a brief account of my reasons for speaking. The physician who had meanwhile arrived, kept Lady Vavasour in her room, but pronounced her sure of her life; and her friends had liberty to revisit her.

However, I was not easy. I saw that Sir Philip, amidst all his joy, had a feeling of disquiet; and I knew but too well the reasons he had for it. The life being saved, but the happiness not secured, I began to reproach myself for my hurry;

and my reproaches were greater, when I heard what Lady Vavasour and he had resolved upon.

I saw her in the morning. She was pillowed up on the sofa, and the colour that came in her cheeks, when I entered, lit her face for the moment with such a mixture of joy, sincerity, and blooming beauty, that I beheld the face which Sir Philip had described to me, when he gave the account of his first seeing it. She kissed my hand, called me indeed her friend, and said she should bless me until her dying day. I discovered, that he had not been alone with her again, since the two hours of the evening before. Presently he came in. I happened to say, that I thought it would be right in me to go to town; and asked if he had any commands. I observed that they both turned pale on the instant. Sir Philip said, that he proposed to have gone with me next morning; if I could stay as long. "As long as you please," said I, "but cannot I leave you and come back again?" An indescribable expression passed over both their faces; and I saw plainly, though I tried not to come to the conclusion, that they had resolved upon a terrible sacrifice.

I was half inclined to throw off some of the doubt and anger I felt with myself, upon the heads of these new offenders. "Is virtue then," thought I, "of no use but to thwart people?"

And must I be thwarted, who have not been so very virtuous either?"

Lady Vavasour, seeing me disconcerted, called me to her, and again kissed my hand, looking at the same time a thousand grateful things. I saw it all in a moment, and did not at all agree with it; but how could I add pain to such hearts as these? I withdrew into the park, and walked up and down, scarcely knowing whether I walked at all. I was in the midst of my uneasiness, and thinking what I should say to convince Sir Philip that they were in the wrong, when an outrider of Lord Waringstown's dashed over the sward, not heeding the carriage road, and suddenly discovering me, turned his horse towards where I stood, and came foaming to me with a packet. I opened, read a little, and dashed into the house as fast as he.

"'Tis all happy," cried I, to the servants, as they tumbled out of my way. "'Tis all happy!" to Mrs Jeffs, not disliking her crabbed face. "Susan!" cried I, as she scampered behind me up the stairs, "'tis all happy and joyful—I shall kiss you presently." "Bless me!" cried Susan, "is our Sir Ralph running mad?"

I heard that Sir Philip was in Lady Vavasour's room, but somebody with them as usual. "How very much alone they will be!" thought I. I stopped a

moment at the door to gather breath, Susan having arrived just in time for her kiss; and then giving her to understand, that she was to be as staid as myself, went in with surprising self-possession, and called Sir Philip into another apartment. "There," said I, "my dear friend; as you seem to have made up your mind to the delights of misfortune, you will have need of all your philosophy. Stay," continued I, putting my hand over the papers, as he was about to read them, "I am wrong. The news is so happy, that I ought to prepare you for it: forgive me: it is indeed much more than happy; singularly, triumphantly."

Sir Philip looked as if he was about to refer for explanation to Mrs Susan. "My dear friend," cried I, "the circumstances of the last two days, have fairly affected my unphilosophical head; so you must have enough philosophy for all of us. Mark that. The news is so *transcendantly good*, that you must support *yourself*; your friend, Lady Vavasour, Lord Waringstown, and everybody. Lady Waringstown will be here in a minute."

I watched my friend's face with a curiosity I cannot express. He bore the shock of delight well, but I could see it was at the cost of so much emotion, as gives these patient people in one moment the agitation of years. I did not choose

to look as he read on. Upon turning round he was kneeling at a chair, his hands clasped before his buried face, and his whole frame shaking in the agony of *thanks*. What he afterwards said to Lady Vavasour, or how she bore it, God only knows; but I was admitted to see her at nine o'clock in the evening, summoned by my charming Ellen, who arrived meanwhile with her father and mother. My Lord and Lady were both there; Sir Philip walking up and down, enduring his happiness. I thought the Countess bore it better than he; but I believe women have a knack at sustaining immeasurable delight. I kissed her hand, and my Ellen's together, for I found them so; but nobody said anything. In the course of a minute, Lord Waringstown, the best of Jesuits, led me to speak of Miss Earlom, of whom I could observe they had just been talking. I said what I had thought of her from the first. They hoped and trusted she would still be happy. Ellen wiped a tear from the Countess's eyes; and this pity, I verily believe, enabled them all to endure their transports.

I shall now state what this blessed mystery was.

The discovery of Miss Randolph's birth, or at least of the extreme probability of it—(for it was not known at that time) by the resemblance she

bore to her father, had sharpened the attention of Lord Waringstown to other young faces; and as Miss Earlom came before him when he was under the full influence of this curiosity, he could not help thinking he had seen her face before. He made enquiries of her connexions from Sir Philip; who knew no more, than that her father had been one of the first merchants in the Canaries. He enquired of the aunt, who seemed in no disposition to gratify him; and this made him more curious. He consulted some old papers,—memorandums; and there he found,—“Jan. 14. 16—, “E. E. begged me to make peace between Mr and Mrs E—m which I did,—he promising to pay the account.” *E. E.* was *Edvardus Eques*, which was the designation for Sir Edward Herne, in the memorandums of his benevolent friend. His Lordship now began to feel certain; and anxiously made the aunt repeat her assurances that Sir Philip and Miss Earlom had always been kept apart; which the other did with great pride and complacency, saying she knew how particular the English gentry were in that and all other antenuptial matters; that the English residents in the Canaries were equally so; and that Sir Philip should have every proof which his noble conduct demanded, of the spotless integrity of the family into which he married. Lord Waringstown became

more and more suspicious, and more pleased. He thought fit, however, to take the precaution of warning Sir Philip against unguarded moments, when the best of young persons might forget themselves, and so become as melancholy sacrifices to their virtue as others do to their vices. Sir Philip looked surprised, acknowledged the truth of his remark, and the touching beauty and behaviour of Miss Earlom ; but said, that if his friend knew his heart, he would know, that nothing was further from possibility, than his seeking unwarrantable comfort in that quarter. Lord Waringstown did know it, and was again satisfied ; especially as the moment was approaching, when his suspicions might be determined. If they could not, he still meant to state them to Sir Philip, and thus create a turn in Lady Vavasour's favour, which he thought not only allowable for its own sake, but not to be omitted for the sake of all.

The next step taken by his Lordship was an application to our friend Mr Braythwaite, to know if that worthy and confidential person, *e secretioribus*, remembered what had become of a certain little girl, the daughter of Mrs Earlom, consort to a wine merchant, to whom Sir Edward had owed the largest bill in the memory of wine-drinkers. Mr Braythwaite at first could not tax his memory with the recollection of any of the parties,

except his worthy, but somewhat profane friend Sir Edward; but upon having it intimated to him, that he might do a great service to divers loyal people, and that no harm could come to him, unless he refused the service,—there being a little outstanding overpayment of some few years for teaching and board, &c—Mr Braythwaite did suddenly, and with a humorous quip at himself for his bad memory, call to mind, that the said Mr Earlom would insist upon taking away the child to the Canaries, before it had had its time out under Mrs Warmestre's kind care; the husband of the said Mrs Earlom, in whose absence the child was born, being just dead, and Sir Edward's order for the payment of the years subsequent never having been disputed at Herne House, for reasons best known to the delicacy and piety of the Baronet's widow. What further monies the said widow paid to the said Mr Braythwaite, rather than have her husband's name called in question, and the secrets of his house with them, Lord Waringstown did not make to appear, contenting himself with disclosing his cognizance thereof; whereupon the said Mr Braythwaite redoubled his readiness to be of service, and his Lordship accordingly took him into a room full of company, where he was presented to my Lady Viscountess, and to Miss Waring, late his acquaintance Miss Randolph, and to Miss

Earlom, and to the aunt. The Viscountess knew and endured him for the occasion. To the aunt he was presented as a particular acquaintance of Mr Earlom and his wife, whereat the harridan turned pale. Not that she had any knowledge of the affair under enquiry, but she knew as well as any one the gay life of her sister, and saw that Sir Philip would come to know it. Little did she know of his noble nature, in fancying that he would let the innocent suffer for the guilty. Not having a noble mind of her own, nor anything like it, she had no conception of the nobleness of others; and she was anxious to secure an unexpected and wealthy alliance, that she might live twenty times as well as she ought to do, and be surrounded with liveries, and boast of those that despised her, for the remainder of her days.

“Pray Mrs Powell,” said my Lord, “do you happen to remember, where Mrs Earlom was in the year so and so?”

“In England,” said Mrs Powell, after a pause. She thought she had better say where he was not, at all events; for Mr Earlom was not famous for the integrity of his whereabouts, any more than his wife.

“Excuse me, madam,” said Mr Braythwaite;—“in the Canaries. I happen to know it from a very particular memorandum.”

"Perhaps you can call to mind, madam," said Lord Waringstown, "the year in which Miss Earlom was born?"

"'Twas the year before, unquestionably," said Mrs Powell.

"Pardon me, madam," observed the dreadfully correct Braythwaite, "it was the year after."—Mrs Powell looked aghast, not knowing to what all this tended.

"Do you see the likeness I speak of, Mr Braythwaite?" said Lord Waringstown, after a little more discourse about the Earloms.

"I wonder, my Lord, that Sir Philip did not see it," said Mr Braythwaite; "'tis so striking it would have startled me in the public ways."

"Sir Philip was too young to have received a lasting impression of the face," said his Lordship.

"Your Lordship is right," observed the agent.

"Miss Earlom was the only child of her parents?" said Lord Waringstown, enquiringly.

"The only one," said Mrs Powell:—"her mother,—her father, never had any other;—never."

She says those two nevers, thought his Lordship, because she knows she had half a dozen,

Lord Waringstown saw that he should have no trouble with the old lady.

"Will you be good enough to step this way,

madam," said he;—"and will you, my love, say what I told you to Miss Earlom?" addressing her Ladyship.—"Ellen, my darling, you will stay awhile in the chamber."

The old lady was shewn the whole matter in a few minutes. She was very indignant at first, then sullen; but on Lord Waringstown showing her, on the one hand, a picture of desertion and poverty in a foreign land, for the sister of Mr Earlom; and on the other, a good reasonable house and appurtenances in England, for the aunt of Sir Philip Herne's sister, she fell into a strain of abject gratitude. It was clear she knew well enough the illegitimacy of her niece, though equally so, that she did not suspect who was her father. She now undertook to pour forth her thanks to heaven for the prevention of a crime not to be thought of; and was for running to announce the awful rescue to Miss Earlom, when his Lordship said he would fetch her himself. Mr Braythwaite took his leave, undertaking to return with the necessary documents in the course of the evening, which he did. My father-in-law joined his lady and the poor girl, who bore the news with greater firmness than was expected, and said, with floods of tears, that she should be proud of Sir Philip as a brother. Her father she did not remember, and her mother

very little; but what little she did, had made a tender impression upon her, which added to her distress. Next day the journey was taken to Mickleham, the party offering to take Miss Earlom with them, under an impression, that, all circumstances considered, she might the sooner get over the worst part of her feelings. But she said well, that God had been merciful enough to work a change in her in that respect, more sudden than she could have looked for, and that she would beg leave to stay and console her aunt: all which endeared her to us the more. She married the Viscount, sure enough. The gallant Lord was glad to compound with legitimacy for a handsome stock of Sir Philip's diamonds, which her good brother generously gave her; and she has made him such a pleasant wife, witty and wild withal, though full of goodness, that he says he does not know which is best in her veins—Sir Philip's blood, or the Canary wine.—As to Sir Philip and myself, we were married about three weeks after the discovery; our pleasant neighbour, a real Mr Dalton, who was keeper of the King's cellar, sending us a present of such Canary, as helped to reconcile us to the name.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a few years after this blessed conclusion that we heard of the horrible attempt made upon the Duke of Ormond's life in Piccadilly, when the daring villain who headed it would have hung him at Tyburn, if the gallant old Duke had not wrestled with him;* and some time after this attempt, we heard of the still more extraordinary one on the crown and regalia, when the keeper was nearly killed, and the robber boasted with impunity that it was he who had made both attempts. We were in London, on the last occasion, at Sir Philip's town house in Pall Mall, and were consi-

* It was on this occasion, and in the royal presence, that Ormond's son Ossory told the Duke of Buckingham, that he knew he was at the bottom of the design against his father's life; and that if anything happened to it, he should treat him accordingly, and pistol him, though behind the King's chair: "and," added he, "I tell it you in his Majesty's presence, that you may be sure I shall keep my word." Buckingham said nothing.

dering one morning whether we should ride or go on the water, when somebody came in to say, that the King was going to examine the robber himself, and that the latter was to make his appearance at Whitehall in the course of an hour. The moment we heard the King was to examine him, we saw how it would be, and what friends he must have at court. Herne and I followed thither, and found the ante-rooms crowded like a new Tyburn. Everybody that heard of it, came to see the man that was *not* to be hung. We had reasons for not passing into the interior. In about two hours, a stir takes place, as if a king were coming, and lo and behold the culprit, passing boldly with a quick step through an avenue of faces, all thrusting into his own, in spite of ushers and yeomen.

"'Tis the man!" cried Sir Philip—" 'Tis Dalton!"

" 'Tis Sandford, truly," said I.

"You are mistaken, gentlemen," said a man; "his name is Blood."

"Just so," said Herne: "'tis Blood, Dalton, and Sandford."

"Oh, as for that," answered the man, "I'll warrant he has as many *aliases*, as there are holes in Alsatia."

As the gallant Colonel came up, he bowed with great affability to one or two persons on either side

him, though he did not do so to us. It was clear, nevertheless, by the look of his eye, that he knew us well. He did not, however, change colour. He looked hard and confident, and went on.

The examination, which it was said would be as public as the King could make it, turned out to be private enough; but sufficient audience was present to let it transpire. I will not repeat the history of what everybody knows;—Blood's confident, but at the same time flattering demeanour to his Majesty,—his pretending that he merely meant to take from the jewels the amount of what the Duke of Ormond unjustly held from him in his estates;—his telling the King that he had engaged to take away his life while bathing, but was struck with awe at the sight of "naked Majesty:" (satirical rascal!);—his assertion, that if his own life were taken, there were many persons sworn to revenge it in the most dreadful manner—worse than that attempted on the Duke of Ormond, to which he avowed that his "madness at his wrongs," had urged him:—and finally, his artful refusal to name his accomplices—"No, not for any tortures; for, though he was a man that might be led by a course of injustice into crimes, secrecy and fidelity were virtues not to be torn out of him; and a pardon would make him, *and fifty more*, the most devoted servants of the Crown."

The pardon was given accordingly; Ormond was "complimented" with a request to join in it, which he did with the most loyal of shrugs; and in the course of a month from the epoch of his rape of the crown, Colonel Thomas Blood, Lord of Sarney and the Glinns, and God knows how many other gravel-pits of unspeakable profit in the county of Wicklow, was the most content, influential, confidential, polite, self-possessed, well-behaved, modest, impudent, infernal scoundrel, in the royal presence. Mr Evelyn told me one day, with a pious horror, that he had dined with him at the table of the Lord Treasurer, in company with Grammont. I agreed with his horror; but I did not ask him what business he had in such company. All this is very well known; but what is not so well known is, that Buckingham certainly had to do with the attempt on the crown; and that if the king did not know it, he had a pretty ignorance of the matter, that did as well. He had to look, he knew not where, for something that was to happen to the crown jewels. He would then have had a new crown, God knows what having happened to the old one.* This is what Mr Braythwaite intimated to us one day, when he

* It is proper to state, that the present charge against the King has been brought nowhere else.—*Edit.*

came with a message from Sir Philip's lawyer (for somehow he knew everybody); and by the same token, he was very drunk that day, for he had taken to his friend Earlom's enemy in his old age; and by a token conclusive, he was found hung up at a lamp-post in Little Chelsea, with a paper and a wine-bottle round his neck, purporting that "This was the body of a traitor."

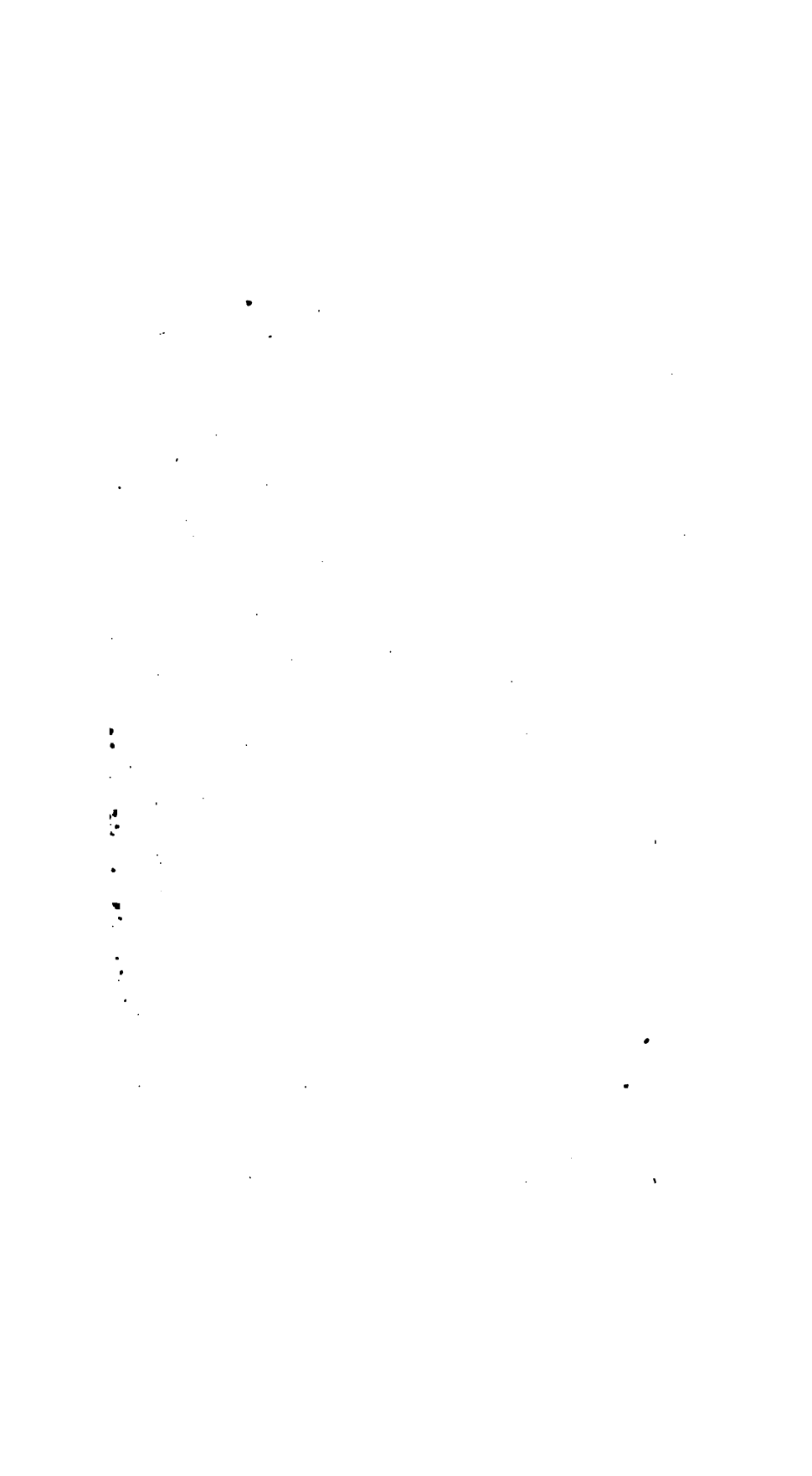
Furthermore, the Countess of Vavasour, my Lady Esher, and the rest of us, being at Lord Arran's one morning, and his Grace the Duke of Buckingham coming in, the said Duke did, in perceiving us, absolutely blush up to the eyes, bowing at the same time low to Sir Philip, and complimenting the ladies with one of his most graceful speeches; for which the said ladies, in a manner inconceivably correct, curtsied in profound silence to the floor.

THE END.

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